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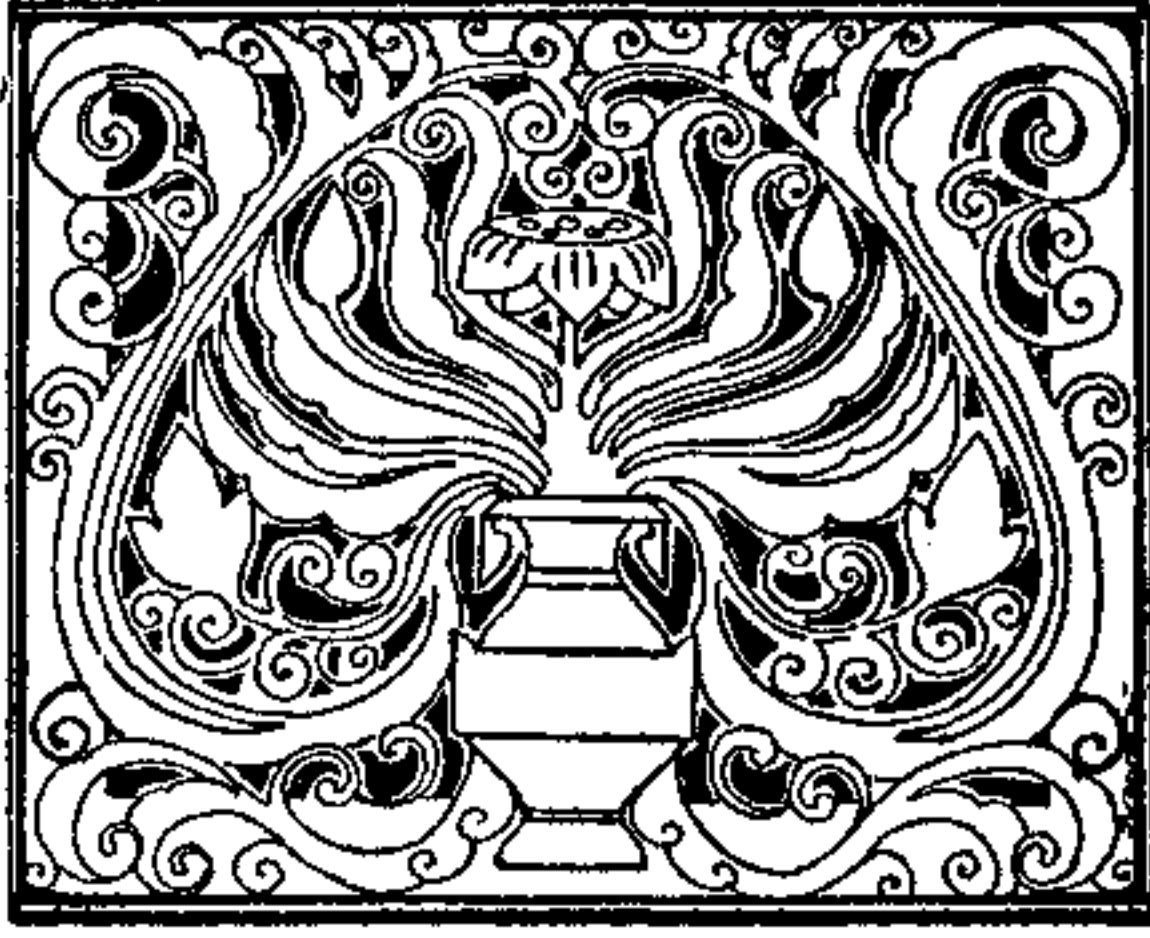
JANUARY 1972

Prabuddha Bharata

OR



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Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 1

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by Vaikuntha): 'Sir, we are worldly people. Please give us some advice.'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Do your duty to the world after knowing God. With one hand hold to the Lotus Feet of the Lord and with the other do your work.'

Vaikuntha : 'Is the world unreal?'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Yes, it is unreal as long as one has not realized God. Through ignorance man forgets God and speaks always of "I" and "mine". He sinks down and down, entangled in maya, deluded by "woman" and "gold". Maya robs him of his knowledge to such an extent that he cannot find the way of escape, though such a way exists.

'Listen to a song :

When such delusion veils the world, through Mahamaya's spell,
That Brahma is bereft of sense
And Vishnu loses consciousness,
What hope is left for men ?

'You all know from your experience how impermanent the world is. Look at it this way. How many people have come into the world and again passed away! People are born and they die. This moment the world is and the next it is not. It is impermanent. Those you think to be your very own will not exist for you when you close your eyes in death. Again, you see people who have no immediate relatives, and yet for the sake of a grandson they will not go to Benares to lead a holy life. "Oh, what will become of my Haru then?" they argue.

The narrow channel first is made, and there the trap is set ;
But open though the passage lies,
The fish once safely through the gate,
Do not come out again.

Yet even though a way leads forth,
Encased within its own cocoon,
The worm remains to die.

This kind of world is illusory and impermanent.'

A Neighbour: 'Why, sir, should one hold to God with one hand and to the world with the other? Why should one even stretch out one hand to hold to the world, if it is impermanent?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'The world is not impermanent if one lives there after knowing God. Listen to another song:

O mind, you do not know how to farm!
Fallow lies the field of your life.
If you had only worked it well,
How rich a harvest you might reap!

Hedge it about with Kali's name
If you would keep your harvest safe;
This is the stoutest hedge of all,
For Death himself cannot come near it. ...

'Did you listen to the song?

Hedge it about with Kali's name
If you would keep your harvest safe.

Surrender yourself to God and you will achieve everything.

This is the stoutest hedge of all,
For Death himself cannot come near it.

'Yes, it is a strong hedge indeed. If you but realize God, you won't see the world as unsubstantial. He who has realized God knows that God Himself has become the world and all living beings. When you feed your child, you should feel that you are feeding God. You should look on your father and mother as veritable manifestations of God and the Divine Mother, and serve them as such. If a man enters the world after realizing God, he does not generally keep up physical relations with his wife. Both of them are devotees; they love to talk only of God and pass their time in spiritual conversation. They serve other devotees of God, for they know that God alone has become all living beings; and, knowing this, they devote their lives to the service of others.'

INDIA NEEDS VIVEKANANDA EVERMORE

EDITORIAL

I

Between the birth of Rammohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, and the death of Mahatma Gandhi, 'the father of the nation', more than a hundred and fifty years intervene. Speaking historically, this period has been one of the most glorious chapters in India's age-long existence. A great renaissance, with all the attendant agonies and ecstasies, destruction and construction, came into being and continued to flourish. A plethora of leaders rose in every field of individual and national activity. Science and arts, education and literature, politics and social reform, philosophy and religion—not one field was left out, not one field proved infertile. And many of these leaders were born on the rich soil of Bengal. Of these, again, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are outstanding by virtue of the power and influence they manifested.

Undoubtedly, some intangible laws govern the birth and blossoming of a renaissance. One of them seems to be that the great leaders who nourish it are in turn created and fostered by that very renaissance wave. On the golden crest of the present wave stand the twin luminaries, the great Master and his chief Apostle. And none can forecast how long they will ride the crest. A revolution has spectacular beginning and end but a renaissance has only a beginning. Five or ten centuries may glide away before a renaissance wave spends itself out. Said Swami Vivekananda to a Western devotee at Belur Math: 'The spiritual impact that has come here to Belur will last fifteen hundred years.... Do not think I imagine it, I see it.'¹

¹ His Eastern and Western Disciples: *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1961), p. 251.

ONWARD FOR EVER!

It is the one test, that truth must make you strong and put you above superstition. The duty of the philosopher is to raise you above superstition. Even this world, this body and mind are superstitions; what infinite souls you are! And to be tricked by twinkling stars! It is a shameful condition. You are divinities; the twinkling stars owe their existence to you.

I was once travelling in the Himalayas, and the long road stretched before us. We poor monks cannot get any one to carry us, so we had to make all the way on foot. There was an old man with us. The way goes up and down for hundreds of miles, and when that old monk saw what was before him, he said, 'Oh, sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk any more; my chest will break.' I said to him, 'Look down at your feet.' He did so, and I said, 'The road that is under your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet.' The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars; all these things are under your feet. You can swallow the stars by the handful if you want; such is your real nature. Be strong, get beyond all superstitions, and be free.



On the Indian soil a renaissance will languish and fizzle out unless it has a powerful spiritual core. Because religion is the backbone and the keynote of national life. That religious motive power has been amply supplied by Sri Ramakrishna. As it was with the Buddhist renaissance, the present one also plays the dual role of world-moving and nation-making. Swami Vivekananda, with the power transmitted by his Guru, has accomplished this dual mission in his less-than-forty years' life. 'I have a message to the West', Swami Vivekananda said to a Western audience, 'as Buddha had a message to the East.' In Vivekananda the past and future of India fused in an ideal way and he shines as the symbol of integrated India for centuries to come. He had introduced himself to one of his countrymen as 'I am condensed India'.

The personality and power of the Saint of Dakshineswar lived and moved, laughed and taught in and through the dear disciple.

II

It is not with the world-moving but with the nation-making aspect of Vivekananda's mission we are concerned here. He was a worker at foundations : a root-and-branch reformer, as he characterized himself once. It demands an intimate knowledge of the roots and branches of the national tree before one can lay claim to be such a reformer. The roots of an ancient nation like India go deep into its historic and prehistoric past. They are a tangle of vitally living and dead and rotting roots. Only a man who has relived the entire national past and embodied it in himself can undertake to spare the living and shear off the dead roots. The society and the people, their beliefs and aspirations, their achievements and weaknesses represent the branches of the national tree. A theoretician cannot sort out the deadwood from the living branch, but a man who has been a

'field-worker'—one who has lived and moved in the society, associated and identified himself with the members—can do that. Swami Vivekananda was such a man.

Writing the insightful 'Introduction' to the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Sister Nivedita lists the three 'formative influences that went into the determining of his vision', 'the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda'.

First comes the literary education of the Swami in Sanskrit and English. Thereby he earned the historical perspective and saw the contrast between India and the West. Second in order came the Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, who in his brief life of fifty-one years 'lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life, and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations'.^{1a} These two equipped Swamiji with the authentic clinical knowledge to distinguish the dead and diseased from the living and vital roots of the national tree. The last of the formative influences was the Motherland. He wandered throughout India, from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari—unlike a globe-trotter who took a vanishing railway view of the country—mixing with masses, the poor and the illiterate, the rich and the learned, studying, learning, and teaching. He saw India 'as she was and is, and so grasping in its comprehensiveness the vast whole, of which his Master's life and personality had been a brief and intense epitome'.² Thus he also became thoroughly familiar with the farflung branches of the tree of the Indian nation.

Says Nivedita a little further:

"These are the three lights burning within the single lamp which India by his hand

^{1a} Swami Vivekananda : *The Complete Works*, Vol. V (1959), p. 53.

² Sister Nivedita : 'Introduction' to the *Complete Works of Vivekananda*, (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. I (1962), p. xvii.

lighted and set up for the guidance of her own children and of the world in the few years of work between September 19, 1893 and July 4, 1902.'

The light of this unique lamp streams forth through the *Rṣi's* illumined intellect from which the past and future, matter and space can scarce conceal their secrets.

Even when this blazing lamp lights the paths of India's children and promises to shed its light for many centuries, we are a little puzzled to hear some persons, who consider themselves modern and wise leaders, assert that Vivekananda is no more relevant to contemporary India and her problems. They seem to demand new guides and ideas, probably imported from foreign countries. This is a point which needs to be carefully analyzed and studied.

We are not against learning anything new and beneficial, from whatever quarter it may come. Assimilation is the spirit of our culture. Besides, Swamiji was one of the first national leaders to tell Indians that they have many things to learn from others. In fact, he and his great Master often declared that they wanted to learn as long as they lived. The spirit and teaching of these two sages can never bring on, so to say, mental and social sclerosis.

To the so-called modern leaders we like to ask these questions: Have you given a fair trial to the remedies and solutions prescribed by Vivekananda in tackling India's problems? Have you implemented his suggestions for building a new India? Has today's India freed herself from the moral and social weaknesses exposed by Vivekananda, and become a strong, united, and self-reliant nation?

If they are honest, they cannot answer these questions affirmatively and truthfully at the same time.

Our nation and our countrymen have no doubt become politically independent. But economically, culturally, and socially we

are in appalling enslavement. All the symptoms of national and individual decadence that Swamiji had diagnosed—and prescribed infallible remedies—are all very much present amongst us today below the external gloss we have acquired on borrowed capital. Tinkering here and there with exotic expertise will only speed us further on the slide of degeneration.

'Go back to the Upaniṣads!' Vivekananda commanded his countrymen. We take the liberty of restating that command here: 'Go back to Vivekananda! He is a great mine of strength.' In that return lies the restoration of individual and national health, vigour, stability, integrity, and prosperity.

III

Swami Vivekananda, as he himself made known, was a worker at foundations. To him, with his firsthand knowledge of India and the world outside, the defects in our people and society became distressingly glaring. He said that India can and must be regenerated only through religion, by making Vedāntic teaching accessible to all and bringing it into everyday life. That alone would unify the country: 'Let all your nerves vibrate through the backbone of your religion.' He wanted the women and the masses to be raised. Women should be free to determine and work out their future in the mould of the past heritage they have received. The masses must be fed, clothed, and educated. As he said, they must be given back their lost individuality. Next he wanted his countrymen to become strong and full of faith in themselves and their destiny. Patriotism, he said, consists not in verbal assertions but in unselfish and loving service to the less fortunate citizens. He spoke of making an ideal society with 'European energy added to Hindu spirituality'.

But he went to the very heart of the mat-

ter when he said that it is the *men* that make the country. And so his nation-making programme inevitably pivoted on man-making. In one of his stirring Madras lectures, he said that what his country most needed was 'man-making religion, man-making theories, and man-making education all round'.

We can only spotlight here a few of the grave defects in national character that he pointed out along with the way he indicated to eradicate them. Without shaking off these defects with determined effort, it may never be possible for us to build a strong, prosperous and integrated India.

Jealousy and Disunion

Swami Vivekananda knew that jealousy was a character-trait of Indians. But it became painfully patent to him when he was victimized by this 'cursed and terrible' jealousy after his phenomenal success in America. As he wrote to a brother-monk, 'That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others and burning at heart at the greatness of others.'³ The pain became keener when he found that the Westerners were nearly free from this vice. He saw a similarity in this respect between Indians and the negroes of America who would not allow any one of their own men to become great.⁴ He knew the cause of this jealousy: it was due to our centuries of slavery. He concluded a letter to a disciple in Madras with this counsel:

'Keep this letter and read the last lines whenever you feel worried or jealous. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of our nation. Avoid that always.'⁵

Westerners' lack of jealousy was seen in their intense spirit of co-operation and conjoint action. The spirit of independence co-existed in them with the virtue of obedience.⁶ Swamiji observed the grievous

contrast between Westerners and Indians in the capacity for organized action. Once he said to Mrs. John B. Lyon that he had the greatest temptation of his life in America. She liked to tease him a bit and said, 'Who is she, Swami?' Swamiji burst out laughing and replied, 'Oh, it is not a lady, it is Organization!' He saw the Americans had worked miracles with the power of organization. That he fervently wanted his countrymen to cultivate this virtue by abjuring jealousy is clear from the fact that he has returned again and again to it in his letters and talks.

What he said to the representative of *The Hindu* is worth remembering and topical too:

'Here in India, everybody wants to become a leader, and there is nobody to obey. Everyone should learn to obey before he can command. There is no end to our jealousies; and the more important the Hindu the more jealous he is. Until this absence of jealousy and obedience to leaders are learnt by the Hindu, there will be no power of organization. We shall have to remain the hopelessly confused mob that we are now, hoping and doing nothing.'⁷

It is strange that we are still in the jaws of jealousy—natural to slaves—though we are politically free for nearly twenty-five years. Organization and concerted action shipwreck here on the rocks of mutual jealousies, selfishness, and indiscipline. Wherever we turn,—of course, with a few honourable exceptions—in industry and business, in politics and education, in public and private enterprise, infighting and disarray greet our eyes. A leader is absolutely necessary in any corporate undertaking. For the success of our ventures and for national prosperity, our people must learn to sink differences, obey orders, and work in unison. Otherwise, as Swamiji ob-

³ *The Complete Works*, Vol. VI (1963), p. 252.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 286.

⁵ *ibid.* Vol. V (1959), p. 107.

⁶ *ibid.* Vol. VI, p. 349.

⁷ *ibid.* Vol. V, p. 216.

served, we will remain the 'hopelessly confused mob', achieving nothing and stagnating for all time. Let not the leaders boss over the rest nor the followers, with a perverted sense of liberty, rebel against the leaders. Let the leaders, being free from jealousy and selfishness, try to set an example to others and share their power with others.

Who can say that the following words of Swamiji are irrelevant to present-day India?

'Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and, above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.'⁸

'We Indians suffer from a great defect, viz. we cannot make a permanent organization—and the reason is we never like to share power with others and never think of what will come after we are gone.'⁹

Laziness and Insincerity

During his inland wanderings, Vivekananda discovered that the vast majority of Indians were steeped in sloth and stupefaction. The English-educated were no exception to this rule. He wrote to one of his disciples from America: 'Do you mean to say that I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic cowards that you find only among the educated Hindus?'¹⁰ That description of the educated Hindus may be equally applicable to many today. He knew that this inactivity was not a result of *sattva*, spiritual poise and tranquillity, but animalic *tamas* or inertia. Even as he reached Japan on his way to America, he became aware of the striking contrast between the dynamism of other peoples and the moribund inactivity of his own countrymen. When he eventually visited America and Europe and saw with his own eyes the

tremendous technological advancement and material prosperity achieved through hard work and indomitable energy, he was convinced that India needed to be roused from her somnolence to dynamic activity. His rousing call to the nation as embodied in his lectures and letters, conversations and dialogues, is indeed fiery and galvanic. 'Let us work hard, my brethren;' he invites his countrymen, 'this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future.'¹¹

We Indians, by and large, sadly lack the sense of personal involvement in nation-building projects, either publicly or privately sponsored. Most of us, the educated stratum not excluding, think that there is nothing else to do after independence but to wrangle over our rights. And our Constitution has provided a great many of them! How naive is this attitude! Have you heard our men and women talking and discussing about their duties to the nation and world at large? This ease-loving, narrow and indolent attitude is one of the main reasons for the fall in production and the rise in prices. Whatever the opinion of the financial experts and policy-makers in this country, wealth is nowhere produced by juggling with the national budget or debating learnedly in the Parliament. But through earnest, hard, and sustained work. Did U.S.A., or W. Germany, or Japan, the three leading affluent countries with top-ranking G.N.P. figures, find any other way? Nationally, Indians can never rest on their oars for two centuries to come. Swamiji spoke these following words to our countrymen seventy-five years ago and no one could possibly improve the exhortation even today:

'... but, whether it comes or not, each one of us will have to work for the idea as if it will come tomorrow, and as if it

⁸ *ibid.* Vol. VI, p. 349.

⁹ *ibid.* Vol. VIII (1959), p. 456.

¹⁰ *ibid.* Vol. V, p. 96.

¹¹ *ibid.* Vol. III (1960), p. 154.

only depends on his work, and his alone. Each one of us will have to believe that every one else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves.' ¹²

It is degrading and demoralizing for a country to live on the charity of other nations. Foreign loans and aids, with or without strings, may be beneficial as stimulants to domestic economy. But any overdose will devitalize the whole nation, beyond recovery, into a state of mummified existence. Slowly but surely clank down the fetters of economic slavery. Swami Vivekananda, the evangelist of strength and self-reliance, wrote from America to a disciple, 'Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism.'

Along with hard and intelligent work, we need to cultivate strict integrity in business and honesty in public dealings. Vivekananda was a great lover of his country and countrymen but he was not blind to their faults. To his penetrative gaze the dishonesty and insincerity of his countrymen were clear as crystal. 'Our insincerity in India is awful;' he thundered in a lecture at Lahore, 'what we want is character, that steadiness and character that make a man cling on to a thing like grim death.' ¹³

He studied Westerners and their institutions as no one else from India had done. He turned his study into a lesson for his countrymen in these memorable words:

'The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised, are supported by the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.' ¹⁴

Swamiji had great admiration for Japan

and her people. He was in ecstasy, as it were, when he visited it in 1893. His letter from Yokohama to his Madras disciples and friends reflects his enthusiasm. He was deeply impressed by the energy and dedication, aesthetic sensibility and patriotism of the Japanese. Today the whole world stands in respectful admiration of the 'little giant's' achievements. Swamiji's admonition to Indians to take lessons from Japan has thus been underscored. He said to a newspaper representative in reply to his question, 'What is the key to Japan's sudden greatness?':

'The faith of the Japanese in themselves, and their love for their country. When you have men who are ready to sacrifice everything for their country, sincere to the backbone—when such men arise, India will become great in every respect. ... If you catch the social morality and the political morality of the Japanese, you will be as great as they are.' ¹⁵

India, at present, seems to be ailing from an acute form of 'moral osteomalacia.' Internally, the country's moral structure seems to be sagging precariously as is evidenced by the public criticism of the ubiquitous 'corruption' from the press and the platform. Externally, the image of Indian businessmen in the international business circles is greatly tarnished. We had occasion to read sometime ago in a leading newspaper a news-item captioned 'Swedish threat to stop imports from India.' ¹⁶ Our businessmen are accused among other things of too late deliveries, wrong and damaged products, going out for short money and not caring to build up business. This perhaps is one instance among many such complaints. It is high time that we started catching the social and political morality of the Japanese, as Swamiji has pointed out.

¹² *ibid.* p. 172.

¹³ *ibid.* p. 431.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Vol. IV (1962), p. 366.

¹⁵ *ibid.* Vol. V, p. 210.

¹⁶ *The Hindusthan Times*, New Delhi, dated October 22, 1971.

Education

Education in India, from the elementary to the university level, is, to say the least, in bad shape. Nearly seventy-five years ago, Swami Vivekananda gave a master-plan for educational reform in this country. As the subject has been frequently discussed in this Journal, we shall content ourselves to a passing reference. Of his many profound ideas, we may take up the one on man-making education. He said repeatedly that we need the sort of training and education which will make us men. Who is a 'man'? One characteristic of a real man is self-reliance. Does our education make our young men self-reliant? We hope not. The Government, both at the State and Central levels, spends millions on the education of our youth. No sooner do they emerge from the universities and other institutions than do they turn round and demand employment from the Government. Where is any self-reliance or manliness in this? No doubt, the Government is partly responsible for this through its strait-jacketing socialistic policies.

In a dialogue with a disciple, Swamiji said :

'The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?'¹⁷

He defined education in various ways but they all hint at man-making. For example:

'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and

by which one can stand on one's own feet.'¹⁸

When, receiving such an education, our young men and women come out of the schools and colleges, we can hope of realizing the dreams of Swamiji about India.

These are only a handful of the problems taken up by Swamiji and discussed thoroughly. But they are very important as they are basic and concern 'man' as such. Only when we have given up jealousy and insincerity; only when we have become diligent, strong, manly, and united; only when we have become spiritual—then it will be time to think of new leaders and ideas, indigent or exotic. But not until then.

IV

Whatever the present hapless state of the Indian people, we are sure that the country has a glorious future. That is what Swami Vivekananda, with his prophetic vision, has painted before us. We must never forget that we are at the initial phase of a great renaissance. The phenomenal power of this renaissance wave is not generated by any human agency. The Divine Power, the *Ādyāśakti* Herself, is behind it. Swami Vivekananda worked as an instrument of his Guru and the Divine Mother. As he once said to a close disciple whom he was sending out into the world: 'Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!'

What he said to the disciple is equally applicable to his life and message. Because they are not his but the Mother's creation, their vitality is inexhaustible, they live for ever. The 'Lamp of Vivekananda' shines for ever.

¹⁷ *The Complete Works*, Vol. VII (1958), p. 147.

¹⁸ *ibid.* Vol. V, p. 342.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kasi

10.3.1915

Dear —,

I have received your postcard dated 4th instant and noted the contents. . . . I am pleased to learn that you are well and have resolved to remain steady in your own work. Try to develop yourself through this work. By the grace of Sri Ramakrishna you will surely succeed. Knowing well you desire to work independently, I advised you to do so freely on your own. Can one feel as free while working under another person as while doing the work of one's own choice? You may feel lonely in the beginning but gradually you will become used to it and others will then be able to join you in the work. To remain steadfast is the thing and that is very difficult. But if by any means one is able to stick doggedly to a work, one will surely succeed. This is a tested truth.

It is good that you do not accept invitation to a *śrāddha* (obsequial ceremony) or marriage. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that devotion leaves a person if he takes food at a *śrāddha* ceremony. When people will come to know that you do not accept invitation at ceremonies like *śrāddha* etc., they will neither press you any more nor be offended. It is good not to take food at ceremonies like *śrāddha*.

To the best of your ability try to do good to others. Seeing your example many others will learn to do the same. Do not harbour any desire in your mind: do not cherish any other attitude in your heart except that of serving Nārāyaṇa. This will produce all-round good. Offer name, fame, etc. to the Lord. For being enabled to serve the Lord with your body and mind offer salutations again and again at His feet and pray in all sincerity that, being seated in your heart, He may always guide you.

If you look upon all women as the images of the Mother of the universe, the embodiment of Brahman, and serve them to the best of your ability, then you will have no cause of fear. Beware—let no other attitude to women but that of the child to its mother ever arise in your mind. When everyone will come to know of your conduct, no one will then be hurt or annoyed; on the contrary, all will be pleased.

Accept my good wishes.

Ever your well-wisher,

SRI TURIYANANDA

MODERN AIMS AND A RELIGIOUS IDEAL

SWAMI PARAHITANANDA

What is the outlook of the younger generation of the 1970s? What are their aims? What is their style of life? Unless we have some idea of the correct answers to these questions, we shall hardly be able to speak to them in their own language. And if we are to communicate with them on any but a superficial level this is what we have to try to do.

The following notes are an attempt to identify some of the more pervasive and less transient features of the outlook and life-style of educated western youth. They are not written for the people they describe: they are written for people whose minds were already formed fifteen years or more ago and for younger people whose minds work in the same way.

Among the aims and values which are considered important by the youth of the West, our survey will focus on those that are compatible with convergence on a religious ideal. This means that the picture which will materialize will be one-sided; but for our overall purpose it will not for that reason be less useful. Let us pause a little longer to be still clearer what our purpose is, otherwise the resulting picture will be suspect and it will not be seen why it must inevitably be an unduly rosy one.

As people with religious convictions we—reader and writer—want to be useful to those of East and West—in this instance especially the rising generation—who experience inner dissatisfaction, emptiness, or suffering, and who seek relief from it. We believe that religion alone can give lasting relief, and that religion alone can bring positive fulfilment of life. We are not concerned about what particular religions young people find their solutions in, provided they are spiritual views and ways

of life. On the other hand we see that all religions are not as complete as each other. They are all complete in that they lead to one and the same Reality; but they are not equally complete in the ways they teach or admit for reaching direct experience of Reality, nor in the adequacy and plentitude of ideas and symbols with which they adumbrate It. Therefore, if young people are not to be repelled or disappointed because religion is presented to them in the form of a particular religion which is a poor representative of religion at its broadest and deepest, it cannot after all be a matter of indifference to us which religious ideal is presented.

The likelihood of effectively communicating with modern youth will be greater according as they are not asked to give up those of their present aims and values which are coherent, but are rather called upon to develop them more fully. We who have religious convictions therefore want to know whether the ideal we present is one on which the rising generation could converge without doing violence to the more rational of the convictions that determine their present line of development. We are not going to change our ideal: if we were to, it would cease to be a revealed ideal, and with that it would cease to have the power which such an ideal has and cease also to be a properly religious ideal. But there is no reason why we should not ascertain what the contemporarily-stressed values are and then proceed to show: (1) that they can be fully realized only in a religious life; and (2) that the people who decisively exemplify the realization of these values are certain definite persons, named such and such, to all of whom religion was very life. This means

that we need to ascertain which are the modern aims and values that are compatible with convergence on a religious ideal. From the religious standpoint, these are the live points, the growing points, of modern life.

After making the analysis, and while the results are still fresh in our minds, it does seem desirable to speak briefly of the religious ideal on which it is evident that modern youth can converge. The more one reflects on the matter the clearer it is that the nature of the ideal is not a matter of opinion. Simply in order to present best the whole scope, potentialities, and beauty of religion and to give modern people the least chance to find shortcomings in it, we have to present a religion that contains as much of all the religions of the world as possible, without being merely an agglomeration of them. It must be one definite revealed religion and at the same time all the revealed religions. Of this something will be said at the end.

Attitudes and styles of life are not measurable in the way that public opinion on definite points is. Just to report that there is a widespread search for freedom is not to be informative enough. We need some idea of the context in which the search goes on. It is typical of the younger generation to be sceptical of generalizations. They emphasize living rather than generalizing about living; and unplanned living rather than planned. Undoubtedly there are inner connections and meanings determining their attitudes. Since they are not themselves any too explicit about these inner connections, information on observable features of outlook and style needs to be filled out with a modicum of interpretation. The interpretations that follow will be partly selective and partly constructive. They will be readings of the modern mind in its more rational workings, for it is in the areas where the modern is more rational

that there is the greatest possibility of being able to communicate with him on religion.

INDIAN YOUTH AND WESTERN

If our interest is in speaking to young people of both East and West, why do these notes deal with western youth only? The answer is that to deal with Asian and African youth is hardly practicable, because the youth of these regions are in an even more transitional state than western—or at any rate the outline of their mood and mind is even less clearly discernible. Let us pause to consider the difficulty in respect of Indian youth, since doing so does have a bearing on our ultimate object.

The younger generation of India are at the meeting-point of at least three major influences, two of which are of western origin. Firstly there is the influence of the West proper. Secondly there is the influence of certain western ideas as these reach India through Russia and China. Thirdly there is the influence of Hindu culture. This last is really more than an influence, being in the blood, bones and subconscious of Young India.

How long it will be before these three and other influences can be assimilated, integrated, and made to issue in an individual and coherent outlook it is not possible to say. As yet an outlook and style characterizing the rising generation in India has not taken shape. True, we speak—and I think we speak meaningfully—of Vivekananda as having a modern mind; and though we think of him as a world citizen, we also think of him as an Indian. But to describe the mind of Vivekananda because that is the mind we should like to see Indian youth taking as their ideal, will not serve the present purpose. We need to start from present facts. Furthermore, so far as the youth of India do open themselves to Vivekananda and do remain true to their own cultural background, speaking to

them is not so difficult a problem. If we have been able to identify ourselves with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda we shall, in our own way, already be speaking the same language as the young people who have opened themselves to these two teachers.

The youth of the West are modern in the special sense that they are the first generation to grow up with parents belonging to an affluent, technically-developed society. They are the first generation to have 'modern' parents. This is the reason why they are called 'post-modern' by one of the experts to be cited; but I shall be content with 'modern'.

By contrast most of the youth of India are either faced with poverty, or at least their prospects on the material level are very restricted. There is nothing particularly modern about poverty; but there is in a large proportion of a nation's youth being brought up in comfort, with a comparatively assured future, and having within reach a greatly extended range and variety of experience through education, TV, travel, and on account of social changes; and all this in the cultural situation which has developed in the West since the Renaissance. How much of the character of this modern mind is due to a classical-Greek and Christian cultural heritage, and how much is the inevitable consequence of technical and social developments so far as these can be isolated from the cultural environment in which they took place, it is not yet possible to say. If there were several examples of countries with an oriental or African culture which had reached the degree of technical and social complexity in which, in the West, a whole generation has grown up, then it might be possible to distinguish inevitable or universal from merely western features of modern life; but we do not have the evidence to do this.

By saying that there is nothing particularly modern about poverty I do not mean to imply that there is no modern state of mind in the under-developed countries. In India, for instance, there definitely is. The impact of modern inventions and ideas has here been much more sudden than it was in the West; and the difference between the new ethos and the preceding one is much greater. To withstand this impact Indian youth are perhaps better equipped psychologically and because of their cultural foundations (even though they may have rejected some of these on the conscious level of their mind); but they are worse situated materially because of extreme overcrowding, great difficulty in getting suitable employment, poverty, and for other reasons. Earlier I spoke of three influences meeting in Indian youth, but the situation is far more complex than that statement without qualification would suggest.

However, I do think the following analysis will have some application to the Indian outlook that is evolved. For one thing, the values which I have represented as receiving emphasis among western youth seem to be the values that will inevitably receive emphasis when the meaning of life is sought within oneself and within normal and present experience, rather than in a God distinct from oneself and in a special kind of experience, now or after death. In the future, Indian youth's search for meaning is more likely to start from the fact of their own existence, rather than from the fact of God's; and this will mean that, West or no West, these notes will have some bearing on what is likely to be the outlook of educated Indian youth when they have begun to find their feet. Though what follows mainly has to do with American youth, there is reason to think that the scene in other non-communist countries of the West is not very different.

ANALYSIS

In the past a large proportion of human energies had to be devoted to seeking freedom *from* painful life. In the modern world a larger proportion of human energies is available for seeking freedom *for* happy or full life. The normal human hunger for enriched life is nowadays rendered acute because of the emptiness of heart, absence of internalized norms, and boredom that technical and social developments have been instrumental in producing. These developments were accompanied by the spread of scepticism. As a result the norms and patterns of behaviour that were self-evident to former generations are no longer so to many of the younger generation. Also, the possibilities of life on its material and cultural levels have suddenly expanded, but, particularly among the poor classes in affluent societies and among most classes in under-developed societies, the possibility of satisfying the newly-acquired appetites and aspirations has not expanded proportionately. These and other factors have given rise to rootlessness, emptiness, frustration, and searching. On the other hand, in the midst of all this, there are signs in the West of a revolution with a potentially-religious dimension.

Attention is frequently drawn to the de-personalizing effect of industrial and social developments. Whether or not the de-personalizing effect of modern civilization has till now been greater than the personalizing, it is likely that with a continuation along the same line of development the de-personalizing effect will predominate. This is said with respect to countries with non-totalitarian forms of government. In countries where a totalitarian form of government prevails, it is not clear how far the submergence of the individual in the collectivity has gone.

Basically the aim of modern people is that of humanity in previous ages : to live

to the full, to be fully alive. They are more free than former generations to do this, and they seek still greater freedom—particularly freedom from the dictation of any ready-made system of values or code of conduct. The aims which they seek to realize they pursue as ends in themselves. These aims are those which seem to be plainly involved in the general aim of being complete persons. Typically, they do not pursue their aims in reference to a transcendent value, such as God. They do not view the present life as a means to a further end. If it is to have value it must have value in itself, in the present, and not because it is a preparation for an after-death state.

The chief aim characteristic of the modern man and woman is, I should say, to be properly a person living in communication with other persons all treated as such. This is still vague. The young people of the 1970s are distinguished partly by the deliberateness and freedom with which they pursue this aim, even though they may not articulate it in quite these words, and partly by what their idea of being a person amounts to.

I shall now note under five heads some modern tendencies which on the one side are connected with this aim, and which on the other are capable of being given religious orientation. They are tendencies which could be made to converge on a really serious, namely a religious, ideal. Whether we call being fully alive, or being fully a person, a really serious ideal depends on what we understand by being alive, or by being a person. It could be anything from a superficial to a profound one.

1. *Rationality*

Usually the feature of the modern mind to which religious people have, in their preaching, given prominence is its rational and experimental approach to life and

religion. Rationality is a relative term. We are all rational, but we all have our own degree of rationality; and this degree is not the same in all circumstances, even for the same person. How rational the rising generation are is a controversial matter into which it will not help to go far now. The influence of Romantic and Freudian ideas generally, and, where they have been influential, of Existentialist ideas, is offered as evidence of anti-rationality. Other evidence is the impatience shown by youth in their dealings with university authorities, and their disparagement of objectivity and reasoned argument. Students are likely to say that so opaque to new ideas and so entrenched are these authorities that only strong action—not necessarily violent, of course,—would have made any impact at all.

There has indeed been an epidemic of student violence and destructiveness for which numerically small sections of extremists have usually been responsible. One of its explanations may lie in the presence of an unsatisfied craving for excitement and novelty, a craving engendered by the conditions of life in an affluent society today. In other words the explanation may in part border on the psychopathological, though it cannot be denied that a psychopathological or a crowd-psychology condition is also an irrational one.

By contrast there are also indications of a wider rationality: for instance, modern people's openness to all ideas which seem to help them understand themselves and human life, and openness to all sides of their nature; their antipathy to sweeping generalizations, systems, formulas, because they see that these can never be adequate to life in the round, being abstractions; their demand that thinking be engaged with life and that education be a preparation for life; their rejection as barren theorizing of intellectuality in which the life of the

thinker is not involved; their insistence that reflection have some basis in first-hand experience; their revolt against the 'merely academic'.

Any discussion as to how rational the younger generation are is bound to be inconclusive. But supposing it be granted that the modern is serious in his search for freedom; and if there is any modern tendency we can be sure of, it is this one: then we can say that so far as he persistently and intelligently pursues the ideal of freedom, he will have to be rational. And to the extent that he fulfils his aim of living at the maximum degree of awareness, he will also be rational.

2. *Freedom, Spontaneity*

To be a complete and free person we must have chosen to be so. And to have chosen to be so will have involved freedom in belief and in personal behaviour that is not anti-social. As might be expected there has been a revolt against authority; and, as might be expected, there has often been a failure to distinguish between rational authority, which is a necessary condition of freedom and culture, and irrational authority, which is a threat to freedom and culture. 'The most dangerous intellectual aspect of the contemporary scene', writes Dr. R. A. Nisbet, a leading American sociologist, 'is the widespread refusal of thinking men to distinguish between authority and power. They see the one as being as much a threat to liberty as the other.'¹

An incapacity to see that civilization and culture are inseparable from enlightened authority, and that freedom is dependent on civilization and culture—such an incapacity is not propitious for a convergence

¹ 'The Twilight of Authority', *The American Review*, Oct. 1970, p. 24.

on a religious ideal—; but the presence of a determined search for freedom is.

In the values of technology the younger generation see an enemy of freedom, and therefore of being fully a person. There is a tendency to reject the contamination of life by these values. Whether this can be done without forgoing the benefits of technology is not clear; and it is unlikely that any large section of people will be willing to forgo them. Nevertheless the typically modern outlook in this direction is as follows. I quote from Dr. Kenneth Keniston, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at Yale University and the author of published studies on American youth :

‘Post-modern youth has grave reservations about many of the technological aspects of the contemporary world. The depersonalization of life, commercialism, careerism, and familism, the bureaucratization and complex organization of advanced nations—all seem intolerable to these young men and women who seek to create new forms of association and action, to oppose the technologism of our day. Bigness, impersonality, stratification, and hierarchy are rejected, as is any involvement with the furtherance of technological values. In reaction to these values, post-modern youth seeks simplicity, naturalness, personhood, and even voluntary poverty. It is not the material but the spiritual consequences of technology that post-modern youth opposes. . . .’²

Freedom in the detail of one’s life and personal relationships and in how one occupies one’s leisure hours, is the modern ideal of spontaneity—of living from moment to moment, so far as duties permit, in a natural, unstudied way. The ideal of spontaneity, interpreted as it usually is in the light of Romantic and Freudian ideas, all too easily degenerates into the principle of impulse-release. Self-discipline is re-

jected; capricious self-indulgence and licence tend to result. These, of course, are not the result of having the ideal of spontaneity, but of wrong ideas of what it consists in and of how it is achieved.

3. *Awareness, Inclusiveness, Openness, Appreciativeness, Community*

Being fully alive is a matter of expanding and deepening our awareness in every phase of our being. The expanding and deepening of awareness leads to inclusiveness, openness, appreciativeness. Dr. Keniston, in describing modern aspirations in this area, is brief and to the point :

‘These young men and women attempt to include, both within their personalities and within their movements, every opposite, every possibility and every person, no matter how apparently alien. Psychologically, inclusiveness involves an effort to be open to every aspect of one’s feelings, impulses, and fantasies: and to synthesize and integrate rather than repress and dissociate; not to reject or exclude any part of one’s personality or potential. Interpersonally, inclusiveness means a capacity for involvement with, identification with and collaboration with those who are superficially alien. . . .’³

Psychological inclusiveness, as it is understood above, amounts to spontaneity, which has been mentioned in connection with the search for freedom. The effect of the tendency to interpersonal inclusiveness has been a definitely discernible internationalism and interracialism. Modern youth are undoubtedly leaders in transcending provincialism and nationalism, and promoting world solidarity. This is to speak in terms of significant sections; the real leaders were a few individuals in the past.

Psychological inclusiveness towards our potentialities for supernormal experience is better called openness. Modern youth

² ‘Youth, Change and Violence’, *The American Review*, July 1969, p. 40.

³ *ibid.*, p. 39.

are agnostic rather than atheist. They see that it would be unscientific to interpret the whole religious and mystical literature of mankind as the creation of immature or unhealthy minds, when there is the much simpler and more adequate explanation, that supersensory and extrasensory forms of experience are healthy human potentialities. Research into extrasensory perception has helped to make people more open-minded; and technology, in making consciousness-altering drugs like LSD easily available, has still more decisively contributed to open-mindedness in those who have taken them, or have friends who have taken them.

Emptiness of heart has intensified the search for the meaning of life. The search must be accounted a religious one, though it mostly goes on independently of religious institutions and formal doctrines. Religion, it is held, is primarily an inward, personal affair, and we must find what suits us.

The modern is more intent on having first-hand experiences than on theorizing about them. Theorizing itself is first-hand experience with regard to ideas, but it is second-hand with regard to the persons and activities theorized about. Nevertheless the modern also seeks understanding, as man has always done. It is widely accepted now,⁴ after the intensive discussions of the twentieth-century, that philosophy is going to give him a choice of several understandings, each of which speaks from a particular standpoint as all speaking must, and each of which is at best no more than probably true. Secondly, it is evident that such understanding as philosophy may be able to give, which is really only tentative understanding, is understanding of an attenuated and unsatisfying form. It is unsatisfying because the modern seeks what man has always sought: not so much knowledge *about* persons, things, existence,

but direct acquaintance with them. No doubt he also seeks knowledge *about*, which is to say, information; but the young people of today are already loaded with information received through modern schooling and the mass media. What represented the wisdom of an *élite* in the 1930s, when the following was written, is the tacit wisdom of many today:

'... Endless invention, endless
experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not
of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance
of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer
to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer
to death.'⁵

The modern seeks knowledge by direct acquaintance, by participation and sympathy—what in the western tradition was and is called knowledge *per connaturalitatem* (knowledge by existential affinity) in contrast with knowledge *per cognitionem* (theoretical or conceptual knowledge). Modern youth are glimpsing again the age-old truth of the interdependence of knowledge and love. Romanticism leads them to seek knowledge by acquaintance in 'a subrational expansion of feeling'. Oriental and mystical influences lead them to seek it in contemplation, 'a supra-rational concentration of will' as one thinker called it.

Writing of the Hippies, Prof. Huston Smith says:

'For the first time since the Renaissance and the Reformation, western society is hearing, through them, the suggestion that perhaps the contemplative life is the equal of the active one.'⁶

This statement is not quite accurate:

⁵ T. S. Eliot, 'The Rock'.

⁶ 'Secularization and the Sacred: the Contemporary Scene', *The Religious Situation 1968*, ed. D. R. Cutler, Beacon Press, Boston, U.S.A., 1968, p. 597.

⁴ Said with respect to the history of western thought.

firstly because the Catholic tradition has all along testified to the importance of contemplation, though other things have caused this testimony to be obscured; secondly because, especially following the Second World War, there has been among quite a few individuals and small groups an interest in contemplation. The Professor's statement is, however, substantially true for large areas of the western world.

With a contemplative attitude we usually associate a certain detachment from the empirical and attachment to the trans-empirical. For the modern, of course, if there is a trans-empirical it is to be found within the empirical. It is perhaps true that some young people are, or attempt to be, contemplative in the normal meaning of the word, and cultivate detachment. But in the overall outlook and style that is typical of many young people there are elements of Existentialism which are not necessarily compatible with other elements that are present. For many, it is by participation, by personal involvement and commitment, that we become aware of the meaning of life, rather than by the detachment either of reflection or of contemplation. The Existentialist idea is that existence reveals its significance to mood.⁷ This can, at a stretch, vaguely be called contemplative. The discursive intellect (*ratio* of western doctrine) is less operative, or at least less value is given to its operations. The person in question cultivates an intuitive receptiveness. If instead of saying with the Existentialist that existence reveals its significance to mood, we say that it reveals its significance to the intuitive or contemplative intellect (*intellectus*),⁸ then we can

make some sense of the otherwise-none-too-intelligible Existentialist claim. Undoubtedly the activity and chatter of the deliberating, rationalizing, planning faculty (generally called the discursive intellect or reason in these notes) tend to shut out the self-revelation of What Is from us.

The evidence that the younger generation have been receptive to deeper things, that they have been grasped by realities in spite of the hectic conditions of modern life, is the sanity and goodness of so much in their outlook and action, and of the extraordinary aptness of their jargon.

The Existentialist attitude—which will have influenced the youth of western Europe more than that of the United States—is not contemplative in the sense in which contemplation is contrasted with action. In fact Existentialism advocates action. One of its basic ideas is that a man realizes himself, acquires authentic existence, by choice, by decision.

Much importance is attached by modern youth to interpersonal communication. Communication here means mutual participation in each other's life by the persons in communication. Communication is a sharing, to the mutual enrichment of the sharers on the deeper levels of their being. It is when people are treated as ends in themselves, not as means to our own ends, that there can be communication of any significance. We can only treat other people as having value in themselves according as we forget our own interests. Unselfishness is the ideal condition of communication. Under this condition our own barriers are lowered and we become appreciative and receptive.

Modern people try to achieve communication with a much wider variety of people than do their elders. The degree of communication varies with the nature of the relationship and of the people related. The idea is that the ticket-collector, the

⁷ J. von Rintelen: *Beyond Existentialism*, (Trans. by Hilda Graef, Allen and Unwin, London, 1961), p. 93.

⁸ In this understanding *ratio* and *intellectus* are two functions of one and the same intellect and two phases of every intellectual function.

shopkeeper, the patient, are not just functions but persons, to be appreciated as such. There is antipathy to relationships that are non-personal, professionalized, exploitative, or power-determined. The endeavour is made to resolve strife by means of personal confrontations in which issues are discussed openly. If there has been impatience, violence, destructiveness, it is not the typically modern way of settling disputes.

Communication leads to community :

fellowship, sense of identity, life in association with others, common ownership. Not a few of the younger generation have gone a good way in actualizing the ideal of community. For instance, each city in the U.S. will have its 'communes' where Hippies know they can get free food and shelter. A hard core of them will run the place, those with money bearing the expenses. Experiments for long or short periods in group living, group farming, are plentiful.

(To be concluded)

AN AMERICAN'S APPROACH TO HINDU TRADITIONS

PHILIP STAPP

To those of us in the West who have turned toward the teaching of the Vedānta there is not only the problem of adopting religious beliefs which are clothed in foreign traditions, but there are also basic cultural barriers to be spanned. We who choose to walk the Indian path may find the mental flora and fauna along the way exotic. There are many customs and practices, at first, difficult to understand. The giant *Aśvattha* tree, mentioned in the *Gītā*, does not grow easily in the soil of Western minds; nor will Western bird-watchers, peering through their binoculars, easily find the *homā* bird which lays its eggs so high in the sky that the newly hatched chick learns to use its own wings before it is dashed to the ground. Many down-to-earth barriers abound. Our customs, our music, our history, our patterns of behaviour, and our ideals of beauty and courage stem from dissimilar sources. We have so many foolish prejudices to overcome. Most people, everywhere, are enclosed in the matrix of their own culture, believing subconsciously that 'Our Way is the Right Way'.

We Americans are prone to call countries with civilizations far older than our own, 'emerging countries'. We are quick to speak disdainfully of Indian 'cow worship', never bothering to inquire into the role which cows played in India's religion and her economy, giving not only milk but dung for fertilizer and fuel; 'sacred', as Gandhi said, because the cow has been a useful and gentle companion for centuries. Nor do most Americans stop to think how we cuddle and pamper our dogs, feeding them copiously, so that television advertisements are devoted to touting tempting dog foods. Nor would any American dream of eating the flesh of a dog.

In India there are probably similar attitudes of condescension and derisive disdain of Western customs. The old Indian word, *mleccha*, suggests that this is so.

The meaning and the very sounds of music are widely divergent in the two cultures. The rhythms of American music must sound simplistic and monotonous to Indian ears, while the subtlety and complexity of Indian music are lost to many

Westerners. To a certain extent this particular barrier is beginning to crumble. In the last few years young Americans have come to listen and enjoy the music of Ravi Shankar. An example of spanning the cultural barrier gracefully was seen recently in the tactful manner in which Shankar addressed an audience of university students before a concert. He said, 'The music we are going to perform requires a considerable degree of concentration on the part of the performers, and equally, requires a strong measure of attentiveness on the part of the audience; therefore I would be grateful if no photo-flash-bulbs are used during the performance.' This was said very gently, with the unaffected humility of a great artist. One could hear a pin drop. No flash-bulbs flashed.

Few of the admirers of Ravi Shankar are aware of how deeply all the arts of India are rooted in religious beliefs, and how, at best they become part of a ritual, rather than a performance for an audience. Western contemporary arts, since the Renaissance, have become increasingly secular. One can hope that in the inevitable confrontation of East and West (brought about by the technological achievements of swift transportation and communication) the devotional aspects of India's music and arts may help to give new direction to the floundering arts of the West. Equally strongly one can hope that Indian artists will not be seduced by the glittering surface of Western culture, with its physical opulence and its flattery of popular taste.

To many Westerners India is the land where the occult thrives. This curiosity about searching for a short cut to the miraculous is not apt to bring about an increase of genuine understanding between the two countries. We Americans need, rather, from India, to relearn to see the miraculous in the commonplace, as

children sense wonder in simple things. At a *pūjā* here in one of the Ramakrishna Centers, after the worshippers and guests had been duly fed, one of the devotees was washing the pots and pans in which the food had been brought. Musing, almost to herself, she said, 'Perhaps the story in the Bible, of Christ's miraculous feeding of the multitudes at the wedding feast in Cana, could be explained by the fact that so many people had brought offerings of food. There might have been more than anyone realized.' Then, almost as an afterthought, she added, 'But, of course, EVERYTHING is a miracle.' This is something which the West, with its plethora of material goods, its hectic seeking for new sensations, has forgotten. The young in America, again, are beginning to sense the emptiness of a culture which provides more and more technological luxuries and little spiritual nourishment. As Swami Vivekananda has suggested, America needs India's spirit of reverence, and India needs America's inventiveness and vitality so that she may feed her hungry; for hunger, too, can be a devastating obstacle to spiritual growth.

These cultural crosscurrents, at first glance, may seem tangential to the basic concerns of spiritual study. This is not entirely so, however, for here at the Vedanta Centers in the United States the student is continually given examples of holy men and avatars who used expressions, practised customs, who admonished and advised within the framework of the culture of India. For instance: very few Westerners really understand the meaning of the Indian caste system in the ideal historic sense. Therefore, when in the *Gītā*, the Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, admonishing him to do his duty, 'Suppose I were to stop working. All would be lost. The result would be caste-mixture and universal

destruction';¹ the Westerner is baffled to find that the mixing of caste is portrayed as the ultimate catastrophe. In the Western democracies the fluid exchange of individuals from one class to another is not considered reprehensible. When he learns that the Indian caste system was a workable ethical tradition in which the highest rank carries the strictest self-discipline (a kind of spiritual noblesse oblige) and where all four castes were judged only by their peers, he is surprised, having been taught that the caste system was a rigid hierarchical bondage with privilege for the few and hopeless resignation for the masses. An understanding of the caste system as it operated historically (and in some places still operates) aids the Westerner in understanding this passage in the *Gītā*.

Another example: In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* one comes repeatedly on the admonition to the devotee to pray above all else for 'love of the Lotus Feet of the Lord'. This phrase, at first, to the Westerner, seems abstract and mystifying. Why lotus? Here again the cultural boundaries arise. The lotus is not a familiar flower in the United States and carries no particular connotation. In India it is a symbol of beauty and purity, and so the phrase 'Lotus Feet' we learn eventually, suggests purity, beauty, and humility. It also comes to remind us of the custom of 'taking the dust of the feet of the holy man', an act of reverence which has doubtless persisted for centuries in India, but which would seem eccentric and exaggerated to the Western mind. When we, in America, come to understand the significance of this gesture, and would even like to use it ourselves to express our affection and respect for our Indian guru, we are hampered by a certain built-in self-consciousness, and a dread of affectation.

To most of us then, in both countries, the external world which forms our environment, is coloured by the conditioning of our cultural bias. We see largely as we have been taught to see. Perhaps as we grow in spirit we may learn to perceive the world through a wider spectrum.

Finally, we are taught that if we realize God we will see the world as a saint or an avatar sees it. Until that time we must be content to pray, and guess: How does the external world appear to a man who has realized God?

We are told that God is everywhere, in all phenomena; not only in scenes which we find pleasant and beautiful but in those which seem distressing and horrible. When one first reads of the vision of Sri Ramakrishna when he saw a woman rise from the Ganges, give birth to a child, and then proceed to devour it, the images are frightening indeed. But then if we begin to think of the vision in allegorical terms we realize how it could symbolize creation, preservation and dissolution; the *Līlā*, the sport of God, transient, illusionary. To grasp this meaning even in a small way is to begin to understand why Kālī (so thoroughly misunderstood in the West) grants loving boons and at the same time wears garlands of skulls.

Both Christ and Ramakrishna described innumerable situations in allegorical terms, not only, one dares to guess, in order to find a pedagogical vehicle in which to drive home a truth, but because this is how they saw the world. Every action relates to God. Sri Ramakrishna said, 'The universe is conscious on account of the Consciousness of God. Sometimes I find that this Consciousness wriggles about, as it were, even in small fish.'² Here is one of the gayest,

¹ *Vide* III. 24.

² 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1947), p. 199.

most endearing sentences in the *Gospel*. Immediately there springs to mind the exquisite beauty of schools of bright coloured fish freely darting about in the sea, the whole nebulous mass one fluid entity, inextricably a part of its own environment, and these environments part of larger and larger environments until the whole universe seems related in a kind of spiritual ecology.

But we are Westerners, conditioned by the discoveries of the physical sciences. So we are told that the whole sea, with its myriad varieties of fish, from the most mammoth to the most minute, is a matrix of organisms, more or less complex, which remains in existence only by feeding on each other. We pause. Is this Mother Kālī in Her terrible aspect? Then we read that scientists consider it makes no difference (in describing the patterns of life in the vast oceans) whether we say that the fish are feeding on each other, or whether we say they are feeding each other. As Sri Ramakrishna said, 'I see that it is God Himself who has become the block, the executioner, and the victim for the sacrifice.'³ Separate paths lead to the same goal.

In Ramakrishna's world, as in the world of Saint Francis, all the little animals reflect some allegorical meaning. The poor

bedraggled devout snake, who was so gentle he would not even hiss; the bird who was so pure it could only drink rainwater as it fell from the sky; the tiger cub who was raised among sheep and so forgot its true tiger nature; all these parables have the penetrating simplicity of thirteenth century religious painting in Italy. In these we can see Saint Jerome calmly holding the paw of a lion while a string of other-worldly birds fly through the limpid sky. We are reminded, too, of medieval bestiaries in which the habits of each animal becomes an allegorical model to aid men's spiritual search. For instance: Ants walk in long lines. When they meet other ants they do not say, 'Give me some of your food.' Instead they find their way back to the source and carry their own grain to the ant-hill. Thus words are not enough. One must go to the Source. Today, in the West, the bestiaries are considered quaint. Perhaps it is this very act of seeing allegorical meaning in all phenomena, of relating everything to God, that is desperately needed so that the commonplace may again become miraculous.

We in the West could be greatly helped by using India's techniques for the purification of the mind, so that we can loosen the heavy shell of our own technological culture. If we understand the traditions of India, her problems, her weaknesses and her strength, our task will be easier.

³ *ibid.* p. 932.

... There cannot be life, even in the plant, without the idea of freedom. In the plant or in the worm, life has to rise to the individual concept. It is there, unconsciously working, the plant living its life to preserve the variety, principle, or form, not Nature. ... The embodiment of freedom, the Master of Nature, is what we call God.



ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

TRUE WISDOM : A STRANGE REWARD FOR DISREGARD

Once king Rahūgaṇa was going in a palanquin to the sage Kapila for spiritual instructions. One of the palanquin-bearers unexpectedly took ill. So the king's attendants looked about for a man to replace him. They came upon Bharata sitting under a tree. Finding him young, strong and capable of bearing the burden, they fixed him to take the place of the sick man. Without speaking a word, Bharata walked on with his fellow-bearers, carrying the palanquin of Rahūgaṇa.

The carriage of the palanquin soon became uneven. Bharata was in the habit of looking on the ground for a short distance before stepping forward lest he should trample over any worms. Rahūgaṇa, finding his palanquin moving irregularly, remarked : 'O bearers, go smoothly! Why are you bearing the palanquin unevenly?'

The bearers submitted : 'O king, we are carrying it aright but this new-comer does not proceed fast enough. So we are unable to carry it evenly along with him.'

The king, not fully enraged, said ironically to Bharata : 'Alas! What a pity! It is clear that you are very tired. You have borne the palanquin single-handed for a long distance! You are not strong and stout. You have become old.'

Bharata uttered not a word but continued to carry the palanquin.

Soon king Rahūgaṇa flew into a rage when he received another jolt. He warned : 'You seem to be more dead than alive. Why do you disobey me? I shall punish you and bring you to your senses.'

Thus scolded, Bharata, who was in fact a knower of Truth and friend of all, said with a smile to the self-conceited king Rahūgaṇa :

'Whom do you call, O king, a fool? Who, you say, is weary? Who is afflicted with old age? "Weary, stout, old"—all these epithets are used by the wise with reference to the body alone and not to indicate the incorporeal spirit. Stoutness, leanness, physical ailments, mental worries, old age, egoism, sorrow, etc.—these exist for one who has identified himself with the flesh but not for one who has become one with the Spirit.

'Life is followed by death. This is seen as a rule in all changeful things. Every compounded thing has a beginning and an end. The relation of master and servant also is not eternal. Except in words there is not any occasion for a sense of difference between things and persons. When such is the case, who is the ruler and what is there to be ruled?'

'O valiant king, of what avail is your punishment to one who, though looking like a lunatic or a drunk, has realized the

self? And if I am really mad, then your punishment would be all the more futile.'

After replying briefly in this manner Bharata bore the palanquin as before.

On hearing these words of Bharata which cut the knots of ignorance, Rahūgaṇa quickly alighted from the palanquin. His pride of learning and kingship had received a decisive shock. He fell at the feet of Bharata and begged his forgiveness: 'Who are you moving about in disguise with profound knowledge and free from attachment? Maybe you are the pure Lord Himself or the sage Kapila in disguise to whom I was going for spiritual instructions. Your profound words are incomprehensible to me. In my vanity of kingship I have slighted you, the noblest of men. Therefore be pleased with me and teach me the knowledge of Self.'

Bharata said: 'So long as the mind of a man is dominated by *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, it wanders uncontrolled to the finite objects bringing happiness or misery. The mind is a storehouse of impressions. It is attached to sense-pleasure. Tossed about by the *gunas* it easily gets tainted by lust, anger, etc. Knowers of Truth declare the mind to be the cause of bondage as well as of the highest liberation. A mind attached to the material objects of enjoyment brings misery and suffering but when freed from such attachment it brings freedom and peace. Variety of objects, time, nature of things which is in a state of flux, throw mind into hundreds and thousands of modifications.

The eternal subject, the eternal witness, is the divine Self—untouched by any deeds or thoughts. It is beyond the mind and the senses. It is light itself. It is God. God resides in the hearts of all. He is the refuge of all. He is the ruler of His own *māyā* and as ruler He dwells in the heart of all He has created. Human beings repeatedly go round the wheel of birth and death until they wake up, and, by controlling their

passions, free themselves from the bondage of *māyā* and know the truth of the divine Self. There is no salvation or freedom until a man frees himself from his own mind, knowing the truth of the Self as distinct from the mind.

'It is the mind that causes the experience of misery, delusion, disease, anger etc. The mind is the abode of all these. Though unreal, the mind robs you of your real nature. O king, the enemy has become powerful because of your negligence. Therefore cast off your carelessness and subjugate your mind with sword of knowledge sharpened by the worship of the Lord.

'There is one Truth, one existence—knowledge itself, the unitary consciousness, pure, unchangeable, beyond subject and object. This knowledge they call God—the Lord of Love.

'Not by study of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor even by good deeds, can one attain this knowledge, but by association with great souls. When the heart has become pure, one takes delight in meditating upon the Lord of Love. Burning the sin of ignorance by the fire of knowledge, man realizes his identity with Brahman, and attains the Lord of Love, the goal of life.

'Indeed, this world can be compared to a dense forest where men have lost their way. There are thieves and robbers in the forest—the senses and sense-experiences—which rob us of our true heritage, the divinity within. There is a mirage before us; we see it and run to satisfy our thirst. There is the thirst for happiness in us, and we run to satisfy this in the objective world, which is as illusory as the mirage. At times we remember that there is nothing desirable in the world, but this we soon forget. We go round and round in this forest and do not find our way out until some kind traveller, some great soul, reveals it to us. The wise, the self-controlled ones, having attained

freedom for themselves, show us the way to freedom.

‘O king, you also are lost in the deep forest of the world. Give up all attachment, be friendly to all beings, and with the sword of knowledge, sharpened by worship and meditation and service, cut asunder the bonds of ignorance.’

When Bharata stopped talking, the king

prostrated himself before him. Thereupon they parted from each other. The king returned to his kingdom, to realize the Truth which he had heard.

—*Sañjaya*

Source : *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Book V, Chapters X-XV.

The Wisdom of God, Tr. by Swami Prabhavananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4.

MAN, THE INFINITE SPIRIT

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Swami Vivekananda once said that man is an infinite dreamer dreaming finite dreams. In this statement every word is important. First, man is an infinite dreamer. Man is infinite. Infinity does not brook any rival. Where the infinite is, there is nothing else ; there cannot be anything finite. Then how does the finite exist? It exists only as a dream.

Man is infinite. But infinity is an abstract idea. What is the nature of this infinite? And how does the finite come to exist? How, why do we find that we are finite, tiny human beings, if our real nature is infinite? That is the dilemma which we are to solve with our lives—if not with this life, with the lives to come.

The Upaniṣad says, ‘There is joy only in the infinite ; there is no joy in anything finite.’ If we are really infinite, why do we have to suffer? How and why were we made finite? One of the Upaniṣads goes directly into the question. In the beginning, there was Oneness. Only Brahman existed. But He felt a loneliness. He said, ‘I am One ; I shall become many.’ In order to become many, He has to dream. It can be done only in dream. So this creation is His dream.

But this dream can be broken, and in

the Upaniṣads we find a direct attempt to break this dream. Some of the sages of the Upaniṣads, by their spiritual experiences, were able to delineate what man really is, what his nature is. That is important for us. The Upaniṣadic sages did not utter philosophical speculations. They did not speak in terms of scientific discoveries. They spoke directly from their own experiences.

The *Īsā-upaniṣad*, which is the shortest Upaniṣad, speaks of the all-pervading presence of God, symbolized by the sun. The all-pervading light of the sun gives us some idea of the infinite. In some religions people worship the sun, offer hymns to the sun. Don’t look down upon them, saying, ‘They are sun-worshippers,’ as if they belong to a lower grade of religion. If God or Brahman is all-pervading, His presence is also in the sun. And the sun gives us an idea of the infinite. Within the sun there is life ; not ordinary life, but eternal Life. There is a Being, a Puruṣa. Puruṣa means ‘one who knows the truth’. There is a Being in the sun who knows the truth. But He is covered by the golden disc. We do not see the truth, we do not see that Being. So the sage in the Upaniṣad prays :

‘The face of truth is hidden by thy

golden orb, O Sun. That do thou remove, in order that I who am devoted to truth may behold its glory. . . . Withhold thy light, gather together thy rays, so that I may behold thee. The Being that dwells within thee—even that Being am I.'

Just think of the boldness of the person who could say that! And he was not bragging. He spoke from his deep spiritual understanding. Out of the fullness of his joy he said, 'The Being that is within you is in me; the difference is only that veiling influence.'

What is man? We find we are the body, and in a subtle way we are the mind. But mind also is ever changing. There is something behind mind. That is the Self, that is the Ātman, or Brahman, or God, call it whatever you like. How do we realize That? First we must penetrate through the physical portion, and then the mental portion. If we can penetrate beyond that, we find that behind every being there is infinite power, infinite blessedness.

In the Upaniṣads there are certain short statements called 'the great sentences' (*mahāvākya*). Persons following the monistic school of Vedānta meditate on those texts, discuss them, think about them, try to find out their meaning. It is said that these sacred texts should first be heard, then reflected upon, then meditated upon; then the truth will come out. It is not simply an intellectual process. The approach is to some extent intellectual, but the purpose, the goal is spiritual.

One sacred text states directly, 'I am He, I am Brahman.' Another says, 'Thou art That.' You, who are weeping, feeling miserable, your real nature is that infinite Being who is behind this drama of life. Another text says, 'What you call your self that is Brahman.' There are four such texts.

In one of the Upaniṣads we find: 'That which is there is also in me.' It is repeated three times in one short Upaniṣad. The

seers were so filled with such ideas, or rather realizations, that repetition became natural. The method of spiritual practice is just to hear, to reflect, to contemplate, to meditate, till the truth dawns on you like a flash of lightning. It comes quickly; it does not come slowly. When the sun rises, at once the whole landscape becomes flooded with light.

In our Himalayan monastery, sometimes I used to stand outside early in the morning, even in winter, to watch the sunrise. First one sees a little ray of light touching the highest peak, called Nanda Devi. Then in one minute the whole range is flooded with light. In the same way, one's whole consciousness is flooded with light when the realization comes.

In the modern age we find one sage, Swami Vivekananda, who reached that greatest height of monism. By temperament he was rational. Perhaps the monistic attitude appealed to him. But I wouldn't say he was simply a monist. He was devotional, too. Sometimes he would shed tears of love for God. But his tendency was toward monism. Fortunately for us, we find that at times he talked from the highest peak of monistic realization. He poured forth his realization in terms of words for the sake of ordinary people. There is so much power in his words: it is as if he wanted to lift people up bodily to his own level; as if he felt amazed when they did not respond. Some did respond. But he wanted to leave none behind. He knew that everyone would realize his divinity sooner or later. But he wanted them to realize it just now. He wanted to lift them up physically, as it were, to his own height.

For us, the important question is, what are the corollaries of his experience? When that realization comes to the plane of daily activities, what shape does it take?

Swami Vivekananda spoke of 'practical Vedānta'. He gave four important lectures

on that subject. Practical Vedānta means that the truths of Vedānta can be practised in daily life—not only practised, they can be realized in daily life. He said, don't think that you are so busy that you cannot practise Vedānta. In the Upaniṣads we find that some of the sages were householders. They led a busy life. At least one of them was a king. So don't think spiritual practice is impossible for you.

But how do we put those precepts into the activities of our daily life? One method is to try to remember always that there is infinite power in you. Intrinsicly you are the infinite Being. Don't say, 'I am weak, I am weak.' That is a great lie. Swami Vivekananda would say, have infinite faith in yourself, faith in your power. He said: You may have faith in three hundred and thirty million gods and goddesses, but if you have no faith in yourself, you are an atheist. It is so true. You fail because somehow there comes an illusion in your mind that you have not that strength. You do not have faith in yourself. That is the worst thing. He could not bear anyone saying, 'I am nothing, I am nothing.'

And if you think of yourself as divine, you must regard everyone as divine. Speaking before a Christian audience, Swami Vivekananda said, 'Every worm is a brother to the Nazarene.' The same power that is in Jesus Christ is also behind an insect; that is life. That spark of life is a reflection of the infinite life. Then you cannot hate anybody, you cannot call anybody a sinner. He would say, 'It is a sin to call man a sinner.' In the metaphysics of Vedānta, the word 'sin' has no existence. Sin is a lower form of manifestation of the divine. When you become virtuous, when you manifest the divine on a higher level, then people will call you a saint. Sin is simply a low degree of manifestation.

Just see what an idea! Nobody is a sinner, nobody is weak. You know, in

some religions the word 'sin' has become an obsession. One does not find how that can be. Even speaking in terms of dualism, if there is a God He is father or mother to us. How can there be sin? No mother will consider her child worthless. If you talk in human language, how can you say that? Swami Vivekananda could not stand that idea.

But monism presupposes dualism, too. It is simply a question of words. In dualism one prays to God and thinks of God as father or mother, and so on. Dualism will say faith; monism will say strength. Dualism will say devotion; monism will say discrimination. Dualism will say heaven, monism will say here and now. Dualists, those who pray, will be waiting for heaven, to enjoy life after death. Monists say, if you are to enjoy life after death, why not here and now?

Through dualism, through love of God also, one grows, one finds God coming closer and closer. When one feels that God is very close, one feels one belongs to God, one is a part of God's love. At this stage, there is the world or matter, soul or spirit, and God—three together. It is called 'qualified monism'. At a higher state, there is one-ness; that is monism. So these are simply different stages, and monism is the final realization. Beyond that, there is nothing.

Ramakrishna used to say, 'If you go into the black waters, you do not come back.' In earlier times, when people would sail for distant countries, there was no surety that they would come back. Some did not return. So if you enter the 'black waters', you don't come back. That means, when you have realized the highest state, you do not come back to this mortal world.

Now if one studies such ideas, even intellectually, philosophically, with a little dedication, not simply for scholarship; if one reads these things out of spiritual

curiosity, what does one find? These Upaniṣads, these sages and ṛṣis, what did they say? With just a little spiritual curiosity, we find this: One is bound to feel a great height, one will be elevated, one will surely be uplifted, one will be ennobled. People cannot but be nobler by reading these things. They remain on a higher level of thought, and these ideas begin to come alive.

And if through intellectual understanding we feel so much benefit, how great will be the benefit if our approach is spiritual, if we read these things in order to try to put them into practice one hundred per cent! If that be so, we should think of these ideas, reflect on these ideas day and night. Swami Vivekananda once said: ... this ideal we must hear about as much as we can, till it enters into our hearts, into

our brains, into our very veins, until it tingles in every drop of our blood, and permeates every pore in our body.

If this be so, we have to think of the ideal constantly. Outwardly we may not be monks; outwardly we might not look like religious persons, but silently within our hearts we shall become transformed. Let us think of our glorious nature, let us think of our reality, what a great heritage we have! Let us try to remember it as often as we can. If we forget it, we must again turn to that idea.

Be strong, have faith. Don't forget your spiritual heritage. Don't be frightened by your shadows. When difficulties come, they are simply shadows. You are infinite, you are omniscient, you are all-powerful. Let us remember that always.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAITH

ROBERT P. UTTER

We sometimes hear it said that mystical religions rely mainly on direct spiritual experience of God, whereas devotional religions rely mainly on faith. The spiritual experience of God is the experience, in supersensuous, super-rational form, of the individual's complete identity with God and with all other finite beings. It is the direct and immediate experience that all apparently finite beings are in reality one with the infinite being of God and are therefore one with the individual having the experience, since he too is one with God. In other words, the mystical experience is the complete transcendence of the finite ego and of all finite boundaries and separations whatsoever. The faith which devotional religions rely on is a faith

in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul and in the possibility of some kind of communion between the two. Devotional religions sometimes tend to disparage the devious philosophical arguments used by mystical religions to explain the identity between the soul and God, and also to disparage their reliance on a completely trans-human mystical experience. This apparent opposition creates confusion in the minds of many people, who, hearing the disputes, come to regard the two types of religion as irreconcilable. But are the two really opposed? Is the faith of devotion really an entirely different kind of thing from mystical experience? Can the immediate divine experience which is the goal of all mysticism

be reconciled with the need for faith in devotional religions? Is faith inferior to direct God vision, or is it a necessary prerequisite to it, or is it a form of God vision?

To answer these questions we must start with a basic assumption: the essential unity of the soul with God. It is often said that devotional religions do not believe in the identity of the soul and God as do mystical religions. But a little examination of the nature of love, both human and divine, will reveal the fallacy of this idea. Both devotional and mystical religions, whatever their 'official' dogmas, lead to the same inner goal, the union of the soul with God. There is no question that the mystic seeks absolute unity, but about the devotee there may be some dispute. However, the greatest teachers of religion have taught the unity of these two paths. Both Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* and Sri Ramakrishna in all his teachings emphasized that love and knowledge are one. Buddha emphasized both love of all beings and also the highest impersonal knowledge of Nirvāṇa. The personal experiences of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and all Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples have borne out the unity of the paths of love and knowledge. Yet even without considering the teachings of the great ones, we can see this truth by examining the inner logic of love. All love, whether human or divine, seeks the union of lover and beloved. The physical union of sex is neither lasting nor satisfying; the emotional union of human lovers is all too subject to chance and change as poets from time immemorial have lamented; the mental union of harmonious and sympathetic minds, though it may be relatively more enduring and satisfying, is still subject to change and human frustrations. But spiritual union of the soul with God is founded on the true state of the soul and therefore endures. It cannot even be said

to endure, for it is beyond time; it is eternal. If it were not based on reality, the soul's communion with God would have no meaning, no conceivability, no possibility even of existing, and it could not therefore be considered the goal of any religion. This, then, is our basic assumption with which we must start: the unity of the soul with God.

What this means is that underneath the appearance of separation and division there is the underlying unity of divine reality. All relationships of any kind are much deeper than they appear, for they are in reality divine. It is the nature of all relations both to separate and to unite; as unreal appearance they separate, but as reality they unite. How could they unite even partially unless they had some basis in underlying real unity? The unitive aspect of all relations, then, is rooted in reality, regardless of how much they appear to separate the terms they join. Just as a river, lake or ocean appears to land creatures to separate its two shores, but to water creatures is seen to unite the two, so all relations have an apparent separative function which disguises their underlying unitive function. In their unitive function, relations are thus symbols of divine reality, which is the total identity of the soul with God, and of the personal God with the Absolute Godhead.

The trouble is that in our all too human lives we do not see the vision of the identity underlying our diversities. Perhaps many of us will never attain such a vision in this life; many of us may have to be reborn a number of times before we attain it. Does that sound hopeless? It need not, for God has given us a golden thread to hold on to while we prepare for the vision. That golden thread has two strands which are twined into one: faith and the repetition of God's name. The two are one, for true faith in God makes us love to repeat His name, and the repetition of His

name with love engenders faith. Indeed, the repetition of His name without faith is useless or impossible. Where does that true faith come from, and how is it acquired, and what does it consist of?

In the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that when goodness declines and wickedness increases then He (Kṛṣṇa or God) takes a human body for the salvation of the good and the destruction of evil. He continually tells Arjuna to have faith in Him (Kṛṣṇa as God) and he will be saved. This is the main purpose of the Incarnation of God, to make it possible for the weak and fallible minds of men to have faith in what is eternally strong and true. A divine man, a human God is the paradox of paradoxes unequalled in the universe. Yet he embodies the paradox of the truth underlying all relationships, the identity between every apparently finite self and the Infinite Self or God. When ordinary men see such a divine man and hear of his life and super-conscious experiences, the weakness of their minds is converted into strength and they are able to believe. They can gain enough strength of belief to sustain them until they can see for themselves with their own purified vision. The divine Incarnation gives direct vision to many, but to others who cannot attain so soon he gives faith, and this faith sustains them until they can have the direct vision of truth for themselves. This is especially applicable to the generations of men who come long after the Incarnation has lived; how are they to benefit from the living fountain of power he brings with him in the flesh? They can only read about him, and though his words are powerful, they may not be powerful enough to remove all barriers to direct vision. What they can do, however, is to inspire faith, faith in the truth of what the Incarnation says.

This is especially true of the words of a recent Incarnation such as Sri Ramakrishna.

The words of a recent Incarnation convey more sense of truth than those of ancient ones because they are in the idiom of the time and their lives are factually more accurate, being verified by recent persons about whom much is known, whereas the words of Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, or Christ sound archaic to us and may have been twisted and eroded by time. A life like Sri Ramakrishna's verifies and explains many of the seemingly mythical and archaic elements in the lives of the ancient masters. Such a man can thus not only kindle faith about himself as divine but renew our faith in the ancient divine ones. Thus he performs a twofold task: he revives the old faith and creates a new. The Incarnations of God are always the sources of faith in spiritual truths among men.

In the case of Sri Ramakrishna, whose acts and words are much more authentic and convincing for us because more recent than those of any other world teacher, we know for certain that he never taught that any religion was wrong; rather, he taught that all are true and harmonious. He practised each one and had the experience of God at the end of each path. Such extensive and profound religious experiences are far beyond the reach of any ordinary man. If we accept Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of God, or even as a perfected man, we must say that he did not himself need most of the spiritual practices he undertook since he contained all knowledge within himself already. Then he must have done it for the elevation of mankind, to reawaken faith in the old religions and to open new horizons for future religions, and for no other reason—that is, to give us a map on our journey to God. His function is somewhat like that of a scout who explores new territory; the scout goes ahead where most people cannot as yet go because there are no roads and the way is unknown. His telling us about that divine

country awakens in us faith in his words.

Yet there are many who feel they cannot believe in the words of another on spiritual matters. To these sceptics we can only point out what a great part faith in the words and deeds of other men plays in our everyday lives. All discoverers are scouts who explore uncharted territory and whom we consider to be reliable men, so that what they say is used by those who follow. If the followers had no faith in the scout they would not dare to follow his guidance; but they do have faith, and so they follow; or, perhaps they follow, and so they prove their faith. This principle can be seen in everything we do. We do not wait to know for ourselves if a given vaccine or serum will prevent smallpox or polio; we have faith in the integrity of all the scientists and doctors and technicians whose labours have contributed to the great discovery; we follow after, and by using the serum we prove our faith in those who discovered it. We 'prove' our faith in two senses: we *demonstrate* it, and we *test* it. It is the same with all machines, appliances, or processes we use in our everyday lives: most of what we do is based on faith in the works of others; we do not wait to prove everything for ourselves. It is the same with the processes of nature. We have a vast practical faith in the uniformity and continuity of nature; we assume that water does not run uphill, that fire burns, that the earth will support our footsteps, and so on. If just one law of the physical universe were to be repealed, our whole world would collapse. But we continue to believe that all will go on as before. Such faith undergirds our lives and it is literally quite measureless in its power and practical effects. We 'prove' it in both senses every day: we both demonstrate our faith and test its basis in truth.

Now, if faith of such tremendous magnitude as this is possible just on the ordinary

sense level, why is it not possible to use an infinitely greater faith for infinitely greater results on the spiritual level? Yet many of us balk at such a faith. Such an objection to spiritual faith is quite inconsistent with our practical lives in which faith plays a major role. If we uphold our sense world by means of faith in worldly men, why should we grudge giving our spiritual lives the benefit of an even greater and more important faith, a faith in the words and deeds of spiritual teachers? There is really no reason why we should not have faith in spiritual men and truths if we have faith in practical things. In fact, a little thought will reveal that spiritual faith has a much firmer foundation, for material things all change and pass away, whereas spiritual things are changeless and eternal. Faith in the changeless is therefore really much more rational.

The perverseness of human life, however, reverses this logic. This fact is illustrated in an episode of the *Mahābhārata* concerning Yudhiṣṭhira and the four Pāṇḍava brothers when they went in search of water and one by one the four brothers dropped dead after refusing to heed the warning not to drink from the lake they had discovered. Yudhiṣṭhira, however, when he arrived, restrained his thirst, and answered the demigod's questions. One of the questions was, 'What is the most extraordinary thing in the world?' and Yudhiṣṭhira answered, 'That everyone sees others die, but yet believes that he alone will not die.'¹ This illustrates a most profound truth about faith and the perversity of human nature. For our faith that we alone will never die is based on the truth of the immortality of the soul, but it is transferred to the all-too-fragile

¹ Paraphrased from Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, *The Song of God: Bhagavad Gita*. A Mentor Classic, New York, 1941, pp. 25-6.

and mortal human body, and we live as if we expect this human body never to die. Thus in our everyday lives we show a touch of the immortal faith needed for the knowledge of God, but how misapplied it is! How clouded and confused our belief! We believe this body, frailer than an egg-shell, to be immortal, while the supreme glory and power of our own eternal self completely eludes us. How far from the truth, yet how close! Thus is the logic of faith twisted and perverted.

So after all we really do have the rudiments of the strong faith necessary to see us through to the vision of our transcendental Self, if we could but use it rightly. All we need is discrimination between the true and the false. And this is what the Incarnation of God can give us. He can awaken in us the truer vision of faith in the eternal in ourselves and others, and thus give our faith, which already exists but is misused, the right use and direction. Through the Incarnation our faith can come into full flower in the direct experience of our own inner divine nature.

Before a child can walk, it seems as though he would never learn; yet suddenly he stands and walks without a helping hand. Before a child can talk it seems as though he would never learn, but suddenly he flowers into words and continues talking the rest of his life. These fundamental skills are learned early in life. Is it possible that only spiritual experience comes late in life and then all is over? Such a view is an illusion; it is based on what we see in common experience, not upon what the sages know. Man is like an iceberg, nine-tenths hidden beneath the illusory surface of the waters of life. If we but dive beneath the surface of experience which is *māyā*, we plunge into the infinite deeps below and see a new world. Then we see that the iceberg is much vaster than what appeared above the surface. Is

it likely that on the physical level the important skills of walking and talking are learned early but that on the spiritual level the even more important skill of spiritual vision is learnt late or not at all? Let us not judge man by one lifetime only; let us learn to look at the whole range of lives and judge accordingly.

According to all the sages, seers, prophets, and Incarnations, man has but one destiny far more important than physical and mental skills on the sense plane, and that is to realize his true identity, his divine self. And according to all of these world teachers, the real meaning of life only begins when the divine knowledge is realized. What happens to the soul then no one can truly say, but that divine realization is the soul's true state. 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' said Jesus to his disciples; 'I go to prepare a place for you.'² Here we find unquestionably a promise of much greater things to come than have already taken place. He also said, 'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.'³ This also implies great unfoldment in the spiritual life, and contrasts that unfoldment with the negative nature of worldly life. Buddha says the same thing in only slightly different words, also promising a similar unfoldment. He said, 'Where self [ego] is, truth cannot be; yet when truth comes, self [ego] will disappear. . . . The cleaving unto self [ego] is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvāṇa which is life everlasting.'⁴ In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in many passages Kṛṣṇa reveals to Arjuna the various levels of existence beyond the sense level: the lower mind, the higher mind, and the spirit, which itself has

² *John*, 14 :2.

³ *Matthew*, 10 :34.

⁴ *Sayings of Buddha*, Mr. Vernon, New York, Peter Piper Press, 1957, p. 42.

various levels, culminating in Nirguṇa-brahman beyond all attributes and differentiation. This is revealed not only in explanations but in the symbolic vision in which Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to Arjuna in his Cosmic Form.⁵ Throughout the *Gītā* it is stated in many different ways that the hidden dimensions of life and being are much greater than the ones which are visible to the senses or the mind. We thus see that life does not end with the attainment in time of the spiritual vision; the real life only begins then. This idea is stated very directly and simply by Swami Brahmananda, who said, "There are some who think that they have already seen God if they have seen a radiant light. Do not be deluded in this way. You must attain nirvikalpa samadhi, where all consciousness of duality is obliterated. Some say that state is the end of spiritual experience, but I believe it to be the beginning."⁶

Sri Ramakrishna used a very simple symbol to express a similar idea: "You hear the roar of the ocean from a distance. By following the roar you can reach the ocean. As long as there is the roar, there must also be the ocean. By following the trail of Om you attain Brahman, of which the Word is the symbol. . . . But such a vision is not possible as long as you are conscious of your ego. A man realizes Brahman only when he feels neither "I" nor "you" neither "one" nor "many"."⁷ Thus he illustrates in simplest terms the vastness of the spiritual life that opens out like an ocean beyond the little senses and ego and he also tells us in simplest terms how we are to attain such a life. He compares the sound

of the ocean to the word 'Om' which is to be repeated with faith in its ability to lead us to the ocean of reality whence it issues. Our faith that the sound of the ocean will lead us to the ocean is compared to the faith with which we are to repeat the name of the Absolute and so reach the realization of it. And the magnitude of the ocean is the symbol of the magnitude of the spiritual life which unfolds to us when we attain the vision. We thus see illustrated in this simple parable both the importance of faith and the importance of the goal to which faith can lead us.

Without faith it is easy to become discouraged, distracted, and lost. In fact, it is virtually impossible to stay on the right path without faith. For until we have the actual experience of God ourselves we have nothing but faith to sustain us. But notice, this faith is not 'blind'; it is faith in the vision of those who have gone before us on the path to prepare us a way so that we ourselves may see. Such faith is, indeed, a form of vision, for it is the vision of the great seers of truth reflected from them to us, just as the moon reflects the sunlight to the earth in the darkness of night. As moonlight is really sunlight, so this light of faith is really our own inner light in its preliminary stages. Our faith in the samādhi of a great seer is in reality our faith in our own capability of experiencing samādhi. If we but nourish that faith enough, strengthen it, brood upon it, meditate upon it day after day, year after year, one day it will blossom into our own divine realization within. This is the true meaning of the repetition of God's holy name, the sacred mantra; it is the careful nursing of our faith in God and in the seer of God, which then becomes, with more and more brooding upon it, the faith in the possibility that we ourselves could see God, which then becomes our very own actual seeing of God.

⁵ *Bhagavad-gītā*, III, 42; VIII, 18-22, IX, 6-27; XI, 35-46.

⁶ Swami Prabhavananda: *The Eternal Companion* The Vedanta Press, (Hollywood, California, 1947), p. 219.

⁷ M.: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1942), p. 404.

Sri Ramakrishna said many times that when one goes to the market he takes a list of things to buy, but as soon as he has bought what he needs he throws the list away. So it is with faith. As the list is a symbol of the things to buy but not the things themselves, so faith is a symbol of God-vision and leads to it, but is not the vision itself; and when the actual vision comes, faith as faith in something other than myself disappears forever, for it becomes transformed into my very own vision, my very own self. A lamp is necessary at night, but when the sun rises the lamp no longer lights anything. But the light of the lamp is a small spark of the fire of the sun, and it too illumines in a small and temporary way. Thus faith is a kind of knowledge, an imperfect, fragmentary, and transient knowledge, but an essential means of achieving true knowledge. Sri Ramakrishna said, 'He who has faith has all,'⁸ meaning that for most people who have not attained true knowledge, faith is an essential preliminary. The fool can only rely on the wise man; by associating with the wise man the fool becomes wise. His very desire to associate with the wise man and his absolute reliance on him is a latent kind of wisdom; it is wisdom in the bud. By having faith in the wise man the tightly-

wrapped bud of wisdom in the fool opens and unfolds. The essential thing to remember here is that according to Vedānta all apparent fools are in reality wise men; their potential wisdom is just temporarily hidden under a veil of ignorance or māyā. So it is just a question of time before the fool's hidden real nature, which is true love and knowledge of the Infinite Self, will manifest itself. Sri Ramakrishna said:

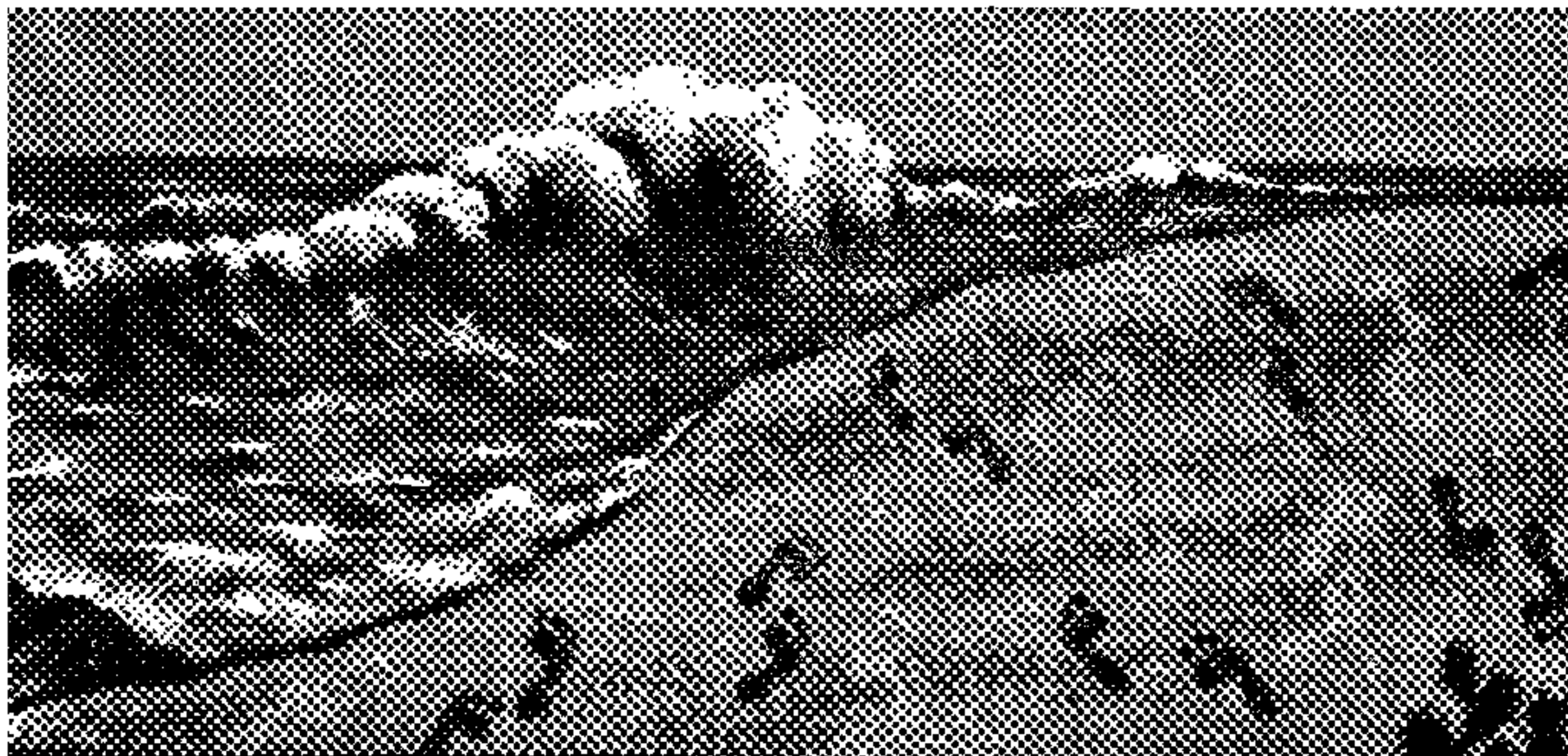
'Knowledge relating to God keeps pace with faith. Where there is little faith, it is idle to look for much Knowledge. The cow which is over-nice in matters of eating is not liberal in its supply of milk. But the cow which welcomes all kinds of food—herbs, leaves, grass, husks, straw and the rest—and eats them up with great appetite, gives an abundant supply. Her milk comes down from the udder into the pail in torrents.'⁹

He here shows the indispensability of faith to knowledge. Just as the cow's food becomes milk, so, as Sri Ramakrishna's parable shows, faith becomes transformed into knowledge. When that happens to a person, his faith in an *other* becomes direct knowledge of his own infinite self. As the bud is the potential flower, so faith is the bud of love and knowledge. The two are really one.

In this way the apparent dispute between faith and knowledge can be resolved.

⁸ *The Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, India, 1960), p. 157.

⁹ *ibid.*



HUMAN TRENDS

NO PEOPLE CAN ESCAPE FROM THEIR HISTORY

It was a day in December 1970. The setting was the old Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. Willy Brandt, West Germany's Chancellor, slowly walked to the monument in memory of the city's 500,000 Jews massacred by Germans during the Second World War. He stood there for a moment with bowed head burdened with history, his broad rugged face showing signs of vicarious anguish. Then as if to atone for Germany's sins against her neighbours, as if in acknowledgement of history's judgement, he fell on his knees. He had felt it deeply that no people could escape from their history. It was the moment for a Beethoven to create a new symphony for celebrating the resurrection of a nation from the shambles of power and pride. If subsequently the 1971 Nobel Peace Prize came through Willy Brandt to West Germany, this resurrection came to be acknowledged by a representative section of world community which had witnessed barbarous actions of Germany's power and pride.

Even though all Germans particularly die-hards of the old generation might not have liked this knee-bending of their Chancellor, it was definitely one of the healthiest signs of German recovery. With that realization which made Willy Brandt kneel before the memorial for massacred Jews, self-gathering or inner integration of Germany

showed signs of reaching an advanced stage.

To be sure, Willy Brandt's kneeling was not a sporadic emotional act of personal idiosyncrasy—a sizeable part of his people was indeed spiritually with him—over a year ago. After the Second World War, young Germans had started a voluntary organization called 'Action Atonement' with the expressed objective of doing expiation for their fathers' sins against fellow human beings. They went around to various parts of Europe and had devotedly rebuilt institutions which their fathers had madly destroyed. And they did this work as penitent seekers of absolution. In the beginning of this movement sufferers of German tyranny did not trust their professions. But at last they were won over by the sheer force of their sincerity and dedication.

Such beautiful things keep happening even in this world. In the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, in the hall prominently displaying the panoramic view of Hiroshima devastated and Hiroshima rebuilt, and in the writing on the wall, you get the account of a subdued feeling of the nation that this disaster had come as a visitation of history upon them. In other words, they too seem to have realized that no people could escape from their history.

How wonderful it would be if nations

realized this truth without having to go through the agonies and ravages of history! But, alas, it seems that no nation can come by this truth without paying the price for it. Though the victim-nation of the A-bomb, for instance, seems to have realized this truth, the victimizing nation seems to be far away from this realization. Otherwise some of its international postures and actions could not be so sordid, as for example, the backing of the military tyrants in Bangladesh. But, all the same, history is being made and there is going to be no escape from it. The earlier they realize this truth and allow it to guide their national and international activities, the better it would be for their children.

Pakistan had its birth in hatred. The self-destruction that is going on in Pakistan is already a visitation of history, with this relieving feature that a torch has been lighted through the sacrifice of many and this is going to burn bright. When Indian leaders accepted partition of the country, they did not hesitate to make suddenly aliens of millions of their countrymen. If today they or their children have come to India in their millions, as battered and shattered 'guests', is it not at least partly due to the fact that no people can escape from their history?

So, whichever nation you be, great or small, beware when you make history!

—A Pedestrian

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1964, pp. 268-70.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from: *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII (1964), pp. 186-7.

Let us not be misled by shallow reasoning and cant. A prophet rises and gives his message which moves with perennial relevance for centuries. The Editorial is an attempt to remove any vestiges of doubts about the relevance of Swami Vivekananda to modern India and her problems.

Though the youth movement all over the world seems to the superficial to be chaotic and aimless, psychological and

sociological studies reveal definite patterns and aspects some of them noble and spiritual. In 'Modern Aims and a Religious Ideal', Swami Parahitananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, makes a sympathetic and systematic study of this fascinating subject. The concluding part of the essay will be published subsequently.

Many a Western reader is sure to be baffled at first by Hindu religious traditions, beliefs, and allegorical teachings. If they keep an open mind and try earnestly to enter into the spirit of those traditions and teachings, they surely succeed. Mr. Philip Stapp provides such a successful example in his perceptive contribution 'An American's Approach to Hindu Traditions'.

Philip Stapp is a member of the Vedanta Society, New York. He has taught and lectured in various universities in the

United States on the theories and techniques of film animation and art. He has won distinction for films he has made, both in America and Europe.

'Man, The Infinite Spirit' is an adaptation from the Sunday talk of Swami Pavitranda, Head of the Vedanta Society of New York. The talk was given by the Swami on January 3, 1971, at the Centre.

'The ignorant, the faithless, and the doubter go to ruin', says the *Gītā*. Faith in the sincere spiritual aspirant is as useful as the stick in the blind man's hand. It helps to avoid pitfalls and makes the journey safer. 'The Significance of Faith' is a well-documented and convincingly argued article by Mr. Robert P. Utter, San Francisco, who is a fairly frequent contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

TO OUR READERS

Once again we are at the beginning of a new year when the *Prabuddha Bharata* enters its seventy-seventh in 1972. And we are glad to offer our greetings, from the serene altitudes of the Himalayas, to all our readers and writers, reviewers and advertisers, friends and sympathisers.

The family of our readers and friends is an ever-growing one, spread all over the world. We are confident that the slight increase in the subscription, necessitated by mounting costs of production, will not affect in any manner the steady growth of our readership. A little extra money, where the propagation and absorption of life-giving and sanity-saving ideas are concerned, is not a serious consideration, after all.

Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, commissioned the Jour-

nal to be 'strong, steady, blissful, bold and free' and to speak its 'stirring words' to awaken the sleeping divinity in man. Whatever the technological advances and sociological upheavals, the search for man's own latent divinity remains the most dominant and compelling truth from whose fascination he cannot turn away. If contemporary man feels 'alienated' in the 'post-modern' society, that alienation is not physical and sociological. The alienation is from his own 'self', his innate divinity. The *Prabuddha Bharata's* 'strong, bold, free, and stirring words' endeavour to remind man of this inherent divinity within himself, his neighbour, and the environing cosmos. In this noble and momentous task of awakening man, we cordially invite the readers and writers, friends and sympathisers to continue their participation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

RULERS OF THE MIND: (A HISTORY OF MENTAL PROCESSES) BY ALDEN B. STARR, M.D., Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, 1970, pp. 88, price \$ 4.95.

This is an eminently readable book, slender in size, but packed with power and with arguments marshalled in logical order. The author presents his main thesis in the Prologue (pp. vii-xvi) and supports it with facts drawn from history and arguments of a philosophical nature in 11 chapters that follow. The 'inter-disciplinary' method which is the fashion today is used and the disciplines so 'inter-disciplined' are history, philosophy and psychology.

The main thesis is the familiar proposition that while science and technology have considerably advanced the horizons of our knowledge of the external world and our powers of control over it, knowledge of man's inner nature and the power to control our self are woefully primitive and effete. But what is new in the book is the author's psychological approach to the elucidation of his thesis. On the surface he seems to be concerned with the 'progress' of humanity through a succession of historical crises, but deep down the author is really studying the evolution of mental processes in man. Who are those who control mental processes of the masses? What are the factors that govern mental evolution? These questions are tackled in the book. In the course of answering them, our author passes in review the institutions of monarchy, tribal chieftainships, and priesthood as the arch-brainwashers of the masses (chapters 1-5). It is not these institutions as such, but the ideas, the abstract generalized concepts underlying them, that grip his attention and ours too while reading the chapters. The dynamism of institutions and the power they possess are due to these ideas. The fifth chapter in particular, is extremely suggestive. The author discusses spirituality, the nature of spiritual leadership and the powerful hold which spirituality has on the human mind. But he just misses the deepest springs of spiritual power.

After the priest comes the merchant (ch. 6), the king having been already disposed off in the earlier chapters. The trader at the international level has controlled the growth of man's mind. And he was soon followed by the scientists and technologists (ch. 8). Science has dichotomized human society into the Right wing (which is right)

and the Left wing (which is wrong). At the moment the Left is poised to destroy the Right. Truly has it been said that the rule of man passed from the Brahmanas to the Kshatriyas, and from these to the Vaishyas. Now it is the age of Shudra rule! And doomsday is not far off.

A man once rode a tiger,

With a smile on his face;

And when the ride was over,

The man was inside the tiger

And the smile on the tiger's face.

That is the doom awaiting us if we yield to the Left wing (Shudra's) rule.

The author, however, does not end on this pessimistic note. He concludes by saying that Reason will triumph and save man ultimately, though just now reason is not much in evidence.

This is a really challenging and stimulating book worth careful study.

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE PATH OF SRI RAMANA BY SADHU OM, published by the City Book House, Meston Road, Kanpur 1, price Rs. 6/-.

THE GOSPEL OF GOOD LIFE BY DR. J. R. GOEL, published by Indian Heritage, 1193, Shora Kothi, Subji Mandi, Delhi 7, price Rs. 5/-.

ESSAYS ON VEDANTA BY SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI, **SHANKARA-VEDANTA-PRAKRIYA** By the same author (Tr. into Marathi by Dr. B. R. Modak), both published by Adhyatma Prakash Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, S. R. Price Rs. 6/- and Rs. 3/- respectively.

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY BY T. R. SESHADRI, price not stated, **CONCENTRATION—THE ONLY METHOD OF EDUCATION**, price Rs. 2.50. **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TEACHINGS ON EDUCATION**, price Rs. 4/-, both Ed. by T. S. Avinashilingam, **CULTIVATION OF HEART**, price Rs. 2/-, All the four published by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, P.O. Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Dt. Coimbatore, South India.

VIVEKANANDA COMMEMORATION VOLUME: INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD THOUGHT AND CULTURE, Ed. BY DR. LOKESH CHANDRA, S. P. GUPTA, D. SWARUP, S. GOEL, published by Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee, 12, Pillaiyar Koil St., Triplicane, Madras, 1970, pp. 705, price Rs. 150/-.

The monumental Vivekananda Commemoration

Volume which contains various illuminating and several illustrated articles on India's contribution to world thought and culture through different ages will be welcome to the scholars of the East and West alike. It has been published on the occasion of the inauguration of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanyakumari. As Vivekananda was the truest and best representative of Indian culture who synthesized the teachings of the Upanishads with those of the Puranas and the Tantras and who combined in himself the heart of the Buddha and the head of Sankara, the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee rightly undertook the Herculean task of publishing such a volume on the great occasion. The publishers deserve our heartfelt gratitude.

The missionary activities of the Buddhists are, at least, partially known to the students of History. But the cultural conquests of the Hindus, their maritime and commercial activities, and the influence of their culture on the art, architecture, sculpture, literature, philosophy and religions of other countries is known only to a few scholars. This volume throws a flood of light on the different aspects of Indian culture. The articles in the present volume show how the different aspects of Indian thought and culture have influenced the civilization of the different parts of the world including Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, Burma, Ceylon, China, Japan, Korea, Siam, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Borneo, Java, Bali, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Soviet Central Asia, Siberia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Persia, Turkistan, and even Europe, Africa and America. Asoka's goodwill missions to Western countries included Syria, Macedon, Epirus, Cyrene, and Egypt. According to Al Biruni Khorasan, Persia, Iraq, Mosul and the country up to the frontier of Syria were, formerly, Buddhist. Indian culture has also exerted its influence on Islamic culture. The early Muslims were receptive and some of the Muslim scholars studied Indian mathematics, astronomy and the science of medicine including such standard works as *Charaka-Samhita*, *Susruta-Samhita* and *Vagbhata-Samhita* through translations. Muslim lovers of fine arts had high admiration for Indian music and dancing. The rational school of the Mutazilites was influenced by Buddhism and the mystic cult of Sufism had its parallel in Indian thought, especially the Vedanta and the devotional cult of the Vaishnavas. Then, again, not only the Japanese religion but also their stories have been influenced by Indian thought.

The influence of Indian culture on Greek civiliza-

tion can never be underestimated. The great Greek philosopher Pythagoras was influenced by the Vedanta and the great conqueror Alexander accepted the superiority of the Hindu wisdom. Even Iranian religious thoughts, Gnosticism, and Judaism could not escape the influence of Indian culture.

Scholars from various parts of the world have contributed illuminating and thought-provoking articles to this volume. An article on 'The Home of Tibetan Learning' from the pen of His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama appears in this volume.

Four admirable articles on the life, activity, and message of Swami Vivekananda appear at the end of the volume. These are: (i) 'Swami Vivekananda, India's Emissary to the West' (ii) 'Swami Vivekananda on Education' (iii) 'Worship of the God in Man' (iv) 'Self-renewal in Indian History and Swami Vivekananda'. Let us discuss briefly the subject-matter of these articles.

The first article shows that Sister Nivedita's remark on Swamiji that he was 'condensed India' is very significant. Swamiji was a new interpreter of the Vedanta which, according to him, tells us that man does not travel from error to truth but climbs up from lower truth to higher truth. The writer also tells us in what sense Swamiji stood for the unity of the East and the West. In the second article the author shows that Swamiji's approach to education was positive. 'Education', according to Swamiji, 'is the manifestation of the perfection already in man' and that 'religion is the innermost core of education'. The learned author also establishes, on the basis of quotations from Swamiji's writings, that he stood for a happy blending of science and religion and that he threw a flood of light on different educational problems. In the third article, we find how Swamiji's ideal of the worship of God in man was inspired by the teaching of Ramakrishna, who identified himself with every living creature. He was the first Sannyasin who could translate the Vedantic ideal of unity into practical life and thus his ideal of service was inspired by the teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by him. In the last article the author brings home to us that Indian social and religious order has always been dynamic and that the reformers of India realized the truth of the poet's saying: 'The old order changeth yielding place to new.' The great movements inaugurated by Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore and Dayananda Saraswati received a new impetus from Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Swamiji preached the fundamental unity of diverse religions and

combined the ideals of patriotism and humanism with the ideal of self-realization.

Several colour-photographs of wall-paintings and temples together with other colour plates have immensely added to the charm of the volume.

It is not possible to cover in a single volume all

the diverse aspects of Indian culture and so we should not complain of any defect or shortcoming.

We expect that every scholar, and especially every lover of Indian culture, will go through the pages of the volume with immense pleasure and profit.

PROF. TRIPURA SANKAR SEN SASTRI

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, CHANDIGARH

REPORT FOR 1970-71

The activities of the Ashrama were as follows during the period under review :

Spiritual and Cultural : Maintenance of a shrine which provides the opportunity and atmosphere for devotees seeking to meditate and pray and participate in the shrine-services. Conducting fortnightly Rama Nama Sankirtan, special observance of the birthdays of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Sri Buddha, Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak ; special worship on the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

Regular weekly lectures and classes were conducted by the Secretary and others at the Ashrama. The Secretary was invited by several educational and cultural institutions to address their members. Invitations were also received from institutions and groups in mofussil places.

The library continued its home-lending service for members. The total number of books in the library was 1440 and that of the books issued 358.

Medical : Homeopathic Dispensary : The free dispensary continued its service to the sick though at a reduced tempo due to factors which made regular daily visits of the attending physicians difficult. The total number of patients served was 5830 of which 1920 were new cases.

Educational : Vivekananda Students' Home was started in 1960 to provide wholesome accommodation to our college students and help them to develop into worthy citizens. The calm environment, homely atmosphere and the personal attention and care of the supervising Swamis have made the hostel an attractive place for earnest students. Weekly classes helpful for building up a good moral and spiritual life were held for the boys by the Secretary and other Swamis. The students participated in Symposia on Gandhiji, Guru Nanak and Swami Vivekananda. The special feature of the year was that the students themselves painted the doors and windows etc. of their respective rooms. The results of the examinations were good ; a high percentage of them got first class and 7 of them secured places of merit. The total number of students : 34.

In order to provide more accommodation and better facilities for the students, the project of completing the first floor of the building comprising residential rooms, assembly hall, community room and bathrooms, at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,25,000/- was taken up. The work was started in Nov. 1970 and was completed in July 1971. The inaugural meeting of the new floor was held on 18.7.1971 in which Governor Sri B. N. Chakravarty presided and Swami Chidatmananda, Asstt. Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, consecrated the completed building.
